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The North American Review

Are You A Falasha?

The Boy Who Loved Shakespeare

"Yes, Virginia, There Is A 20th Century."

The Compleat "In" Opera Guide

Letters From Santa

Haskell Hooked On The Northern Cheyenne

Fiction, Poetry, Departments, and Reviews

Volume 251/6 *November, 1966* *$1.00*

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The Fabulist

THE ONE WHO MADE MONSTERS

Once long ago there was one who made monsters. He made them all sizes: colossal monsters, medium monsters, small monsters, and little tiny monsters that could hardly be seen. They were all monsters, though. Their heads were either too big or too little. Their eyes were crooked so they could not see straight. Some of them had no noses, and some of them had huge, enormous noses, all out of proportion to their faces. Their mouths were put on lopsided, and their teeth were sharp but crooked. Their limbs flailed in all directions, and they lurched when they walked. Some of them tried to talk, but they could only blubber, scream, or howl. Needless to say, the one who made monsters was not too pleased.

But he kept the monsters, fed them, and made order in his laboratory.

He thought for a long time about how to make a better monster. Then one day, in a fit of inspiration, he made a monster unlike any other monster he had ever made. He still put the mouth on crooked, crossed the eyes, and got the limbs mixed up. He even bent the tongue the wrong way. But when the monster came to life, he knew that this one was different because it *tried*. It attempted to walk without lurching. It drooled less than the others, and it became attached to its maker. It even tried to talk. At times the one who made monsters thought he could almost understand the blubbering and howling that came from his newest creation. He felt sorry for it, and in his mind he named it The Incompetent Monster.

Encouraged by his comparative success with The Incompetent Monster, he began work on his next one more carefully. He measured the limbs for a change, instead of merely guessing at their length He took care that the eyes matched and the nose was exactly in the middle of the face. And luckily the size of the monster turned out almost right. Perhaps he built the hips out of proportion to the rest of the body and threw in some unsightly bulges, but for him these were only minor mistakes. Indeed, he began to wonder if this creation would be a monster at all. At times it seemed almost beautiful to him.

When it first began to move he was very pleased. It did not lurch like his other creatures but seemed to flow. The bulges became less repulsive. Its voice was soft and melodious. Its eyes seemed almost alive, but when he looked into those eyes he knew that he had made a terrible mistake. For he saw there was evil in the creature, and he knew it would use the form he gave it for evil purposes. He shuddered, but he could not find it in his heart to destroy the thing he had made. But in his mind he named it The Most Terrible Monster of All.

The one who made monsters put it in the laboratory with his other creatures, and he saw that it worked evil upon them with its soft voice and bright eyes and bulges, particularly upon The Incompetent Monster. When he saw the cunning of The Most Terrible Monster of All, he began to fear. "I have made a beautiful thing," he said, "and it is terrible because it uses its beauty to evil purposes. I will make no more monsters."

Thereupon he went away—no one knows where. He no longer fed his monsters, and his laboratory fell into disorder. Then The Incompetent Monster and The Most Terrible Monster of All dwelt together.

And earned their bread by the sweat of their brows.

Victor Contoski

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The North American Review

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November, 1966

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A LEFTOVER MEATLOAF SANDWICH

Americans who were children in the memorable twenties, teenagers in the terrible thirties, members of the armed forces during the fighting forties and since that time have been taxpayers must sometimes feel like a piece of last week's meatloaf between a couple of slices of angel cake.

Approximately half of the people in this country today were born after 1940. This 50% of the population was born into and has been shaped by an affluent society. An enormous proportion of them are in the

Armed Forces, Vista, Peace Corps, Colleges, High Schools, Elementary and Primary Schools, Pre-School Schools, and cribs.

None of these are self-supporting. They are being maintained in demanding idleness by direct allowances or taxes paid by their parents who are simultaneously and miraculously contributing a major share of support to another 25% of the population composed of those who are near or beyond retirement age and either receiving or anticipating

Social Security
Medicare
Private rest homes or
Care by public agencies such as veterans' hospitals, prisons or mental institutions.

Yet, the working-producing-taxpaying quarter of the American population seems never to complain about this phenomenal development. Understandably enough, no one wants his child to experience the poverty or the hopelessness of the depression years. All want something better in leisure, in education, in travel opportunities for their children than was their own lot as children of the depression.

Angel cake is none too good for today's children.

By the same token, remembering the desolate, beaten eyes of fathers unable to find work and with no source of income, of mothers endlessly preparing meagre meals from empty cupboards, of homes decaying and in disrepair, of worn-out shoes, bare feet and tattered clothes—with such abject memories permanently stained into the subconscious of a quarter of today's Americans, which of them could vote against taxation for social security, against Medicare?

Even angel cake could not compensate for the never-understood loss of human dignity inflicted on these parents when the only world they ever knew crumbled into shards at their feet.

Effortlessly, angel cake can be justified for the old and the young.

What about that generation of stale meatloaf between?

What about that quarter of America's population today who were too young to be nostalgic about the roaring twenties, were robbed of carefree youth by the bleak thirties, flung into far corners of the world in an idealistic but brutal crusade against resurgent barbarism and returned to the economic treadmill only after the goose with the golden down had been plucked naked?

Is the world they fought to preserve and now struggle to improve doing anything for them in return?

Economically, there seems to be no real indication that a depression can be averted or aborted except by maintaining a soul-searing, expensive military economy.

Politically, the power politics of the first thirty years of the century have been slightly refined but continue to function every day in the same old ways.

Ethically, individually and collectively, honor is deteriorating into an all but meaningless word.

Spiritually, God is dead, religion is only questing—not a serious factor in many lives, and Billy Graham fills Billy Sunday's seven league boots.

On the domestic scene (as exemplified by Robert Kennedy and Richard Nixon), the most likely rising stars seem to be hard-driving opportunists with cultivated Hollywood techniques and facades concealing almost incredible desires for personal power. While the tired, middle-aged taxpayer is busily trying to meet the tax deadlines and to balance his checkbook, the very young and the very old have quietly locked in a battle for power. The victory, as it should, will go to the young. Sheer numbers will soon tilt the balance of power to those born since 1940. The change will be here soon, very soon.

Will it be significant?

Have these generations been tempered properly by this pro-longed, non-productive adolescence during a time of economic abundance? Has the new power on the horizon been equipped—spiritually, ethically, politically, philosophically, or in any way—to duel more effectively with the Four Horsemen of Death, Disease, Fire and Pestilence than their fathers were able to cope?

Americans now hovering at the half-century mark choose to ignore

The Bomb
The Population Explosion
Poisoning the Atmosphere
Water Pollution

These gigantic horsemen lurk in the radio-active dust cloud raised by the stamping of impatient hooves, the same dust cloud on the horizon that obscures the hordes born since 1940 who are about to take command of all our destinies.

Soon we will know how well we have prepared them. They have dropped a few clues, but the real test can only come with complete command of the assault.

In the meantime, this cold slab of yesterday's meatloaf hopes fervently that they do not cancel out Medicare.

PKF

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Mr. Noel J. Gorman
Bull Road
Goshen, Mass.

Dear MR. GORMAN:

You just might have noticed in the September issue of the NAR that your short piece, *R. I. P. Pussycat,* appeared in the Pot On The Fire Department without your byline; however, your name did appear in the Contributors section. Please forgive this sin of omission.

Sincerely,
The Editor

FISHING IS STUPID!

As a sport it is pointless, disconcerting, wasteful, and, yes, even painful! Sport? The only "sport" involved is enjoyed by the gods in making fools of fishermen.

Perhaps, at this point, I should explain my positive attitude toward angling and mention my qualifications to speak on the subject: at one time, I, Phineas T. Blaster (O.E.B., Ph.D., LL.D., L.S.M.F.T.), was AMERICA'S FOREMOST FISHERMAN! Worldwide, I was second only to the Russian, P. U. Sergonovitch; this I never considered much of a disgrace, knowing the decade or so of technique classes, examinations, and various indoctrination meetings that one must struggle through over there to be classed as an "official fisherman." (Those Soviets must be first in everything!)

As A.F.F., honors were bestowed upon me constantly; medals fell at my feet like snowflakes, plaques inundated my home. I was named Fisherman of the Year . . . of the Decade . . . of the Half-Century. Five times running I was elected Chairman of the National Committee for Prevention of Cruetly to Fishy Friends. All of the best angling magazines could be found in my home. Each spring I—FOREMOST AMERICAN ANGLER—*took lessons* in a specific fishing technique —reel-winding, lure-polishing, removing hooks from fish-mouths (also boat-sides, fingers, wives' ears, etc.) —to keep up with "the trends."

Despite the fact that the acceptance of these almost-uncountable plaudits seemed sometimes to fill ninety per cent of my waking hours, I did honestly *enjoy* fishing to the very end . . . or, almost so. When a chance to demonstrate my talents to a few greenhorn companions did present itself, I would grasp it, though opportunities were limited. (During my last year as FOREMOST FISHERMAN one of the few times I did any angling was once in a city park, for goldfish. A large gentleman in blue put a stop to that with the observation, "What in Sam Hill you think you're doing, buddy, fishin' in this kids' pond? You a nut, or a Commie?!")

This brings us to the event itself, that unforgettable happening that triggered my rebuke of the sport of angling. It was several years ago, near the very end of my reign as TOP SEEKER OF THE FINNY SPECIES, when I received the invitation of a youthful friend to "go fishin'." For once, my calendar free of appointments, my heart restless for the bounties and beauties of nature, I accompanied the lad to a nearby lake. I smiled tolerantly at his eagerness and, by way of friendly warning, commented on my FOREMOST ANGLERSHIP.

He said nothing.

As we made ready, I noted that the atmosphere was as cold and turbulent as the water. Unfavorable conditions, definitely.

We entered his small fishing boat and rowed to a likely spot. I flipped my line over the side with a flourish. The boy followed soon after. After that, well . . . even now the events of the following minutes (hours?) are difficult for me to recall without chagrin.

Within ten minutes the boy had hooked one "bluegill"—a species of diminutive size but stout heart. He removed the fish from the hook, ran a thin nylon line through its mouth, and cast the entire arrangement overboard. I took this in, I must admit, with a start; then I realized that attached to the opposite end of the line was a small red bobber (remember, the fish is on end #1). The bobber was doing just that . . . bob, bob, bobbing on the surface, following the now-swimming fish. Perhaps fifteen or twenty yards from our boat, the bobber stopped. To this spot the boy rowed us, and "plunk" went his bait into the water. Within half-an-hour he had his limit of this species. Meanwhile using time- and tradition-proved methods, I had snagged three "wood bass" and one "leaf bass" (these are terms used only by Expert Fishermen . . . I hesitate to describe these "catches" literally).

"My boy," I said, "where did you learn that?"

"*Boy's Life.*"

"*Boy's Life?!* Magazine?"

"Yep."

"Hum." Long pause. "What say we move to another spot?"

Following my suggestion, he rowed us elsewhere. Elsewhere, I casted and reeled, casted and reeled, changed lures, changed weights, changed lines, changed rods. Nothing.

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Meantime, the boy had picked up a can of fat red worms and dumped them over the side.

Then he took a second can containing many small silver minnows and held it at arm's length away from our craft.

I hastened to say, "Ah, my boy . . ."

He dumped them in.

Well, I thought, humor the lad. Obviously the extreme weather conditions — or a spoiled bologna sandwich, perhaps — had led to a temporary loss of his senses.

Twenty-five non-humorous minutes passed, and he had taken a limit of crappie, plus three nice black bass. My creel was still warm, dry, fishless—.

"Young fellow," I began. "Ah, not to be overly curious, I was just wondering where . . ."

"*Boy's Life,*" he interjected.

"Hummm." We sat there for some moments — him with his fish, me with . . . me.

He perked up, full of *sympathy* for AMERICA'S SUPREME FISHFINDER! "Would you like to go over by those cliffs?" He pointed. "Looks like a good walleye place. And I know a way . . ."

"No, boy, no."

"Well," he went on, "how about out in the center for catfish? See, we attach our lines to these jugs, and heave them over like so . . ." he gestured enthusiastically.

"No, boy. Row us back to the dock. Now. I just remembered a previous engagement that will force me to cut short our thrill-packed trip."

Puzzled, he rowed. At the pier two large men helped the boy transport his catch to my car. I mumbled something about throwing away little ones like that.

So it was — the expedition that led to my demise as FOREMOST FISHERMAN, and the reason for my bitter denunciation of this sport. If a slip of a lad could out-fish *me*, well, obviously something's wrong with angling!

I suppose I should mention that my former "youthful friend" is now the FOREMOST AMERICAN FISHERMAN and that I am now the Armchair Artist of America. I cancelled my subscriptions to all of those fishing journals and one priceless publication became my monthly reading. I'm still a boy at heart.

You know, the November issue has a suggestion about catfishing that sounds *very* interesting.

James Randolph Norwine
Stephen F. Austin College
Nacogdoches, Texas

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Bernard E. Richardson
Managing Editor

Witnessed by:
Helen Anderson

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

A House committee is currently considering a Truth in Packaging Bill. If it passes there is no telling where the mania for truth might lead. It might even change our American Way of Life by insisting on truth in advertising. Then our advertisements might look something like this:

Cigarettes: Buy this cigarette. It tastes more or less like other cigarettes. It will coat your lungs with tar and may be a serious health hazard.

New cars: Does the beautiful girl behind the wheel appeal to you? Buy this shiny, new car if you need a substitute for virility.

Toothpaste: This toothpaste is not as good as soap for cleaning your teeth, but many famous movie stars are paid to say they use it. It may make your breath sweet for a couple of minutes.

Gasoline: This test shows that cars go further when a special mileage ingredient is added to their gasoline. However this special ingredient is very expensive, and your car would probably go further for the same amount of money if you did not use it.

Loans: If you need money for a worthwhile cause (such as playing the horses or getting drunk), you may borrow it from us. We charge the maximum interest the law allows, and if you fall behind in your payments we will garnishee your wages, write defamatory letters to your employer, invade your privacy, and make you so miserable you'll wish you were dead.

Victor Contoski
Madison, Wisconsin

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LETTERS NEVER MAILED DEPARTMENT

Arkansaw, Wisconsin
October 21, 1966

Mr. Ray C. Bliss
Republican National Committee
1625 Eye Street N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Bliss:

Two completely different reasons prompt me to write this letter.

First of all, as a long-time registered Democrat, I am beginning to worry about the health and welfare of my party. Without substantial opposition to force issues into focus and to present a realistic alternative, any political party is in grievous danger of becoming fat, lazy, secure, foggy in its thinking, lax in its performance, myopic, and so, eventually, may do a disservice to itself and our country. If this should happen to my Democratic party, the GOP must be faulted for failure to provide a sensible opposition.

The two-party system is peculiarly American. Our democratic government *must* have *two* strong parties. Unfortunately and as is well known to your office, such a condition has not prevailed for a number of years.

The Republican Party consistently refuses to assume a dynamic, dignified stance to win back a significant proportion of the independent middle. Please abandon your efforts to consolidate the dissident, outraged and outrageous minorities into the GOP, to pick up the allegiance of the southern white bigots, the far-right Birchers, the die-hard remnants of the America Firsters, etc. These kooks may win a pocket victory for constable here and there, a temporary holding action at a local level, or even a few off-year congressional seats; but, ultimately, can result only in a lingering death for the GOP and a clear road to corruption for us Democrats.

Please adopt a posture which *can* attract large numbers of the moderate middle. In so doing, you may preserve your party, my party, and the two-party system.

A second matter for your immediate attention is the condition of your mailing list. *Please revise it.*

Disregarding my public Democratic affiliation, for years you have kept sending me pitiful pleas for funds. The current letter begs me to "become a Sustaining Member of the Republican Party . . . contribution will be nominal—just $10.00."

Ethics (the last refuge of the poverty-stricken) will not permit me to nourish your party in its present diseased condition. If you will promise to purge the GOP of cancerous growths infecting it and indicate by word and action that you take your obligation to the country seriously, I might be able to scrape up half the requested amount to become a charter and Sustaining Member of the Sub-Rosa Party to Preserve the Two-Party System.

Advisingly Yours,
Diogenes Jones

WITH EYEBROWS AKIMBO?

"**akimbo:** in or into a position in which the hand is placed usually on or near the hip so that the elbow projects at an angle . . ." *(Websters Third New International Dictionary).*

I looked up the word to be sure that my idea that akimbo meant hands on hips was still true because of the encounters I have had with it recently which indicated that that meaning might no longer apply.

A language lives by remaining fluid, changing to reflect and absorb new meanings attached to old words. I cannot make up my fluid mind as to whether or not this is so with akimbo. Since sample usages of akimbo recently encountered bring grotesque images into this mind.

J. P. Donleavy, on page 21 of his trifle of a novel, *The Saddest Summer of Samuel S.,* writes "Plopped down in his duty chair legs akimbo."

Just last week I read in a forgotten place about "bottles akimbo."

The January issue of *The North American Review* published a poem by Peter Michelson in which he has the line "legs akimbo."

After switching off the channel for a moment to excise the impossible image instantly called up by old encounters with the word, I actually bring in a clear picture of legs angled at the knee. Secretly, I hope akimbo has not changed meanings, I enjoy visualizing folk lolling about with their feet on their hips.

The Yellow Dwarf
Middletown, U.S.A.

THE SEX-SPOUT

Reaching the saturation point is usually the direction of no-return, or a complete turn-a-bout. A careful scrutiny has the sexual stimuli savagely stampeding our leisure hours with its raucous display on television, movies and books. The tedious task of titillating the thrill seeker is tantamount to quenching quicksand. It's immutable that the surface sex seeker can't imagine, in his haste to consume the conflagration, the delightful, pleasant reward of romance in the grand style of artistic love.

The sex symbol with its blatant boorish exposition on television has a man shaving with a seductress swinging on every swipe of the razor. The naked truth engulfs the news media—that spectrum that throbs with assaults, rapes, and murders every hour on the hour. Sex is regulated to register.

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Morally, the seed is sowing wild. The crop will be synonymous with suffering and cynicism, giving the delicate filigree of love no fancy or bright future, but instead, a sex pattern of the same sloppy sordid significance unless, enough carefully bred persons live to expect more. Care more. Want more. Then, there's a chance. A big chance for charm to conquer.

Movie scripts are not demanding an artist's talents. There is more curiosity prevailing over how much filth can slip through, how many bare fade-outs can the celluloid strip tolerate. Censors, like the Supreme Court, have become generous and gauche beyond their call of duty. Movies are dependent on the public. Besides producers, there are patrons. Particular patrons of the arts draw a line that is invincible to all the scum flowing in with the tide of tripe that tarnishes the silver screen.

Sex is at its scabbiest at the news stand. Sexy paper backs shout, scream a sordid shoddy invitation to raw ruthless SEX!! It's hard-boiled, rough, tumble deal-me-another-babe reading. Enchantment knows no better master than Love. Sex has become a product, and, who knows when it may become INSTANT?

M. L. Post
Evanston, Illinois

THE PROPOSAL

Step down.
I live below you.
The names have been changed
On the doorposts.
The bells are silent.
I have come here to discover
Who we are.
I have come to ask why.
Forget your fears.
You will hear rain falling
Like rice.
You will stumble on the fossil
Of a blue whale.
The rain will not stop.
The games will go on in other childhoods.
Only the names have changed.
Now we are next to each other.
Stay.
Forget my broken promises.
Forget the lies.
The gaps in my teeth.
The holes in my shoe.
Wait.

I will begin at the beginning.

Robert Elbaz

Are You A Falasha?

Curt Leviant

The heavy window fans rasped. Stretched out on his cot, PFC Herb Kramer curled the pillow around the back of his head and over his ears. Even on Sunday, that day of grace when army rules relaxed and soldiers screwed the regulations, the fans spiked army wind and spirit into Kramer's heart.

The radio said sun-showers. Nevertheless, everyone except Kramer had made the usual Sunday pilgrimage to one of the local Y's. He closed his eyes. The fans blew his thoughts all over the place and finally centered on the pamphlet about the Falashas. Black, skullcapped, circumcised, they squatted languidly in the August heat of his mind.

The Falashas had been there for a week, ever since Kramer had visited the YMHA and written a feature story for his base newspaper: "Peachtree, Georgia, can well be proud of its Young Men's Hebrew Association, for each Sunday they generously provide free hot-dogs and pool facilities for any white serviceman of Fort Harris, regardless of race, religion, creed, or national origin."

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But when the article appeared the next day, Sgt. Bardolf, the *Herald's* nco, had blue-pencilled one crucial word.

Kramer fumed. "What is this, *Pravda*?"

"'We can't afford to antagonize the YMHA."

"Antagonize? Isn't it true they let only whites in?"

"Sure it's true. But if we antagonize them we're anti-semitic. Look, Kramer. You come from New York. You know what it feels like. You got anti-semitism there."

"Not since the spicks landed," Kramer snapped. "And anyway, what's anti-semitism got to do with it?"

"Truth is we got to keep our nose clean. Don't rock the boat."

"Great. But if we say the Y admits everyone, we're lying."

"Sure we're lying. But we're not antisemitic."

Kramer sat on Bardolf's desk and looked out the open window. There was a green field in the distance which he tried to absorb. But Bardolf's face kept fading in. Poor wooden-faced Bardolf, a dope who'd been whizzed through a high-school correspondence course by a faulty IBM machine. "I can understand that if they DID let Negroes in and we said they DIDN'T," he banged the desk, "*then* we'd be antisemitic."

"No. Then we'd be lying."

"'But goddammit aren't we lying now?"

"Sure. But we're not being antisemitic. What are you, stupid or something? We can't afford to be anti-semitic. It's against regulations. We got to keep our nose clean. No telling when an inspector general comes."

"Dammit all. I wanted to show them up, the hypocrites. All right," Kramer said, as one of the Falashas kicked his cortex, 'I got another idea how to get even with the Y."

Bardolf's face gleamed with suspicion. "Hell. What do you want to be picking on your own people for? Didn't I just tell you prejudice against race, religion or creed is against army rules? Read your regulations. What are you, an antisemite?"

"In a pig's eye," Kramer left and slammed the door. A moment later, pleased with his timing, he popped his head through the open window and said, "Some of my best friends are Jews."

He mailed the article to the YMHA, vowing not to set foot in it again. Two days later he reecived a free membership card good for two. He mentally clipped it to the Falasha pamphlet and waited.

The screen door slammed. Kramer looked up and saw his friend Willy Thompson raging in. Without turning to greet Kramer, he marched to his cot at the far side of the room and began slamming the doors of his footlocker and wall-locker.

"Cut it out, dammit," Kramer shouted. "I'm trying to think."

Thompson, poised to bang the iron door once again, looked at Kramer, and slammed it with deliberate vengeance. Then he took a book from under his pillow, lay down on his cot, and began muttering to himself.

Barracks oddball. Guys tap their heads when they speak of him. The whites with typical Anglo-Saxon courtesy make believe he's not there. So do the blacks. *They* think he talks funny, was the educated type, an actor nut. The only guy they knew who blew half his four-week leave in a Mississippi jail for staging a shit-in in a white john.

Kramer smiled. He got up and walked toward Willy's cot. Willy was on his back, holding a copy of *Othello* to his heart. His gaze was screwed up to the ceiling, as if trying to remember the lines.

"Get away from me, white boy. Just get away from me."

"What's wrong, Willy?"

Not a muscle stirred on his face. Willy's eyes were a sizzling nervous white.

"Will you tell me what the hell is wrong?"

"I hitched —"

"Hitched? Where's your car?"

"I sold that wreck on wheels to Jenkins the other day. I need cash." He looked up to the ceiling. His tone changed; it fell into a minor key. The deep brown lids were suddenly pressed shut. "I tried to integrate the white Y all by myself —"

For a moment Kramer did not hear the words. At first he was aware only of the sound, the timbre of Willy's furry voice, hissing musically, rising and falling with passionate cello-crescendoes of scorn and indignation.

"— and got kicked out on my ass."

Looking at Thompson's fine sensitive face, with its aquiline nose and the touch of sadness around the aware ironic eyes, a chill of expectancy wreathed through Kramer. He felt a palpable sense of recognition. One of the blacks in his mind stretched his legs. He had spotted one of his own. Kramer closed his eyes and with eidetic precision saw the entire tableau. A chemical formula was begging for the proper catalyst: named Willy Thompson.

Heart-pounding, Kramer returned to his cot. He waited until he thought Willy had calmed down, then shouted:

"Want to go swimming, Willy?"

The words rang in the humid air. Willy put down his paperback *Othello* and turned. "Oh yea, buster. Where? The Okeefenokee swamps?"

"Nope. Local YMHA."

"No, thanks. Had enough Y's today. Anyway, can't swim well."

Kramer saw the whole plan foundering. He and Willy at the Y dissolved in a pathetic mist. "I did them up grand in the *Herald*."

"Lay off, huh. Got to wait for Jenkins' cash. And I'd rather be with Othello. My own kind."

Kramer put on his trunks and headed for the door.

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"All right," Kramer turned, bursting with frustration. "Sweat it out in this hotbox. Swim in the filthy base pool. You know damn well that none of *us* swim in that integrated mud bath. Was it any better in that Mississippi shit-house? But don't get me wrong. I'm on your side. Along with your buddies, I, too, marched on Kodak protesting the separate but equal facilities for colored pictures."

Willy bounded up and came across the barracks, a giant with seven-league boots. He bared his teeth and lunged at Kramer. The cords of his neck were trembling. "Don't razz me, white boy, not today."

Kramer backed up against the screen door. He saw two black arms flail out like a whip and suddenly felt himself up in the air, his back rubbing the screen.

Willy panted, hunting for words. Spittle gathered in the corners of his mouth.

"Put me down, dammit, you goddam crazy loon. I'm your friend. I wrote about the Y and their policy of segregation."

"Bullshit, you goddam liar. Your pullet-surprise *Herald* said they admit everyone. Why don't you write about real problems? Why there's no black doctors down here? Rather than get a black doctor they put a pair of balls on an army nurse and call her an M. D. Tell the truth, windbag. This is America calling. Why don't you answer?"

Kramer felt a breeze coming through the screen. It cooled the perspiration running down his neck. He saw nothing but Willy's cocoa face steaming into his. Around the kinky hair and the close-set ears he saw two converging rills of cots lean into formation and totter in silent stasis down the barracks aisles.

"Cat got your tongue, windbag?"

Willy pressed Kramer's chest against the screen door. He exhaled a musky odor of anger. The Falashas huddled in one corner of Kramer's mind, pleading for action. Kramer could not talk. There was sweat between his eyelids distorting everything. Broken wires from the screen's edge tacked into his skin. Feebly, Kramer swung and punched Willy's face, shoulders, head; but it was like hitting concrete. Willy grinned, then leaned back and laughed. Kramer blinked; he saw the pink little uvula waggling in the back of Willy's throat; had a wild fear that Willy was going to swallow him. Then the mouth snapped shut and the wall lockers fell, a smear of green, the floor and ceiling spinning a web of dark light as the blood rushed to his head.

Willy dropped Kramer on the cot and watched him bounce until he lay exhausted, flaccid as a rag doll.

Kramer looked up at Willy's menacing head floating on the ceiling, bobbing everywhere eerily, until it began sailing down the barracks aisle.

"Come on, Kramer, out with it. Why'd you want me to go with you so badly?"

Still a bit dizzy, Kramer leaned over his footlocker and pulled out the Falasha pamphlet. "'I had an idea," he waved it. "It would've been a great acting opportunity."

"Oho," Willy bellowed. He ran back, snatched the pamphlet out of Kramer's grasp and lay down on the adjoining cot to read it. "*The Falashas of Ethiopia*" he rolled the title ironically, scanning the words, "King Solomon . . . Queen of Sheba . . . Black Jews . . . 3000-year history . . ." He stopped and looked at Kramer.

"You see," Kramer said, "if you play the part —"

Willy continued reading. He shifted from side to side, grunting, nodding. "I get you, but —"

"Keep reading." Kramer watched Willy's face. Willy read quickly. His eyes glittered like a snake's.

"I don't know if it —"

"Of course it will, Willy. I'm positive it will. There's no doubt about it."

Willy was finishing the last page. A demonic gleam transfigured his face. Teeth clenched, his cheek muscles pressed the skin. He closed his eyes. "Let me think."

"Think. Think all you want. Think with care."

Later, Willy said, "All the Y's a stage."

"Your stage, Willy. Starring Willy Thompson. And Civil Rights."

"They're Jews, too, up there," Willy said. "Southerners. Whites. But Jews."

Kramer saw Willy's reactions; he cast a sidelong glance at his Falashas squatting in the noonday heat, their tongues hanging out. Now that Willy was playing with the bait, a little tease, a little coyness was called for to drive the hook home.

"Do you really think it'll work out?" Kramer said.

"Sure it will. I'm just in the acting mood right now. Let's go."

"Hey, wait. You said you can't swim."

"Hmm, that's true." Willy put the pamphlet down and stood.

The two eyed each other. Who was pulling whose leg now?

Kramer felt trapped. The room was still revolving, hitched to a slow carousel. He picked up the pamphlet. Willy's glance darted into him like fine steel needles. Kramer thought of a hummingbird flying so swiftly through a sheet of green glass that neither was maimed: but both had felt the shock of recognition. Kramer looked up and, meeting Willy's steadfast gaze, lowered his eyes. Who was the hummingbird now; who the glass?

"What an acting opportunity," Kramer said carefully.

Willy snatched the pamphlet out of Kramer's hand. "Come on. I'll show you something you haven't seen on any stage. Y's or otherwise. And anyway, I'd love to make total immersion in your Y pool."

"You sure?"

Willy's voice became more threatening. "Come on now, windbag. You wanted to make a Freedom Swimmer out of me. And now my whimsy-bug has whispered: act."

Kramer picked up his trunks and his white bathrobe and followed Willy.

In the orderly room, Willy wrote a note and told the Charge of Quarters to give it to Jenkins when he

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signed in. The CQ, visibly uncomfortable in his regulation starched khakis, stared gloomily at their trunks. "Swimming, huh?"

"Yup," said Willy. "Kramer here got pull. His own private Y. An enigmatic Y. A Y which is a paradox because it knows no wherefore."

Willy bent over the huge sign-out book. The CQ tapped his forehead and shrugged his shoulders. Kramer agreed.

They drove past the MP gate to the superhighway. Kramer, behind the wheel, was percolating. The idea, then, was coming off after all. The Falashas in the August heat of his mind unfurled themselves and took off, exorcised forever.

"You better fake an Oxford accent, Willy. And wear a skullcap." Kramer opened the glove compartment and pointed.

GARDEN CITY

That town, those days, composed grand
arching pictures down by the river.
Clouds and girls strayed by. Any storm
was temporary. Those hills to the south
rush into the lens, emboss the world;
and I can see so well that the hawks grow
pin feathers. Our class picnic
blossoms in ribbons and watermelon.

Sophomores of that year, you innocent swimmers
dissolved hundreds of times in my prayers:
the world we studied has taken us; it
opened its afternoons deep as a pond. But sometimes
old Main Street at midnight flashes its fin,
or for a moment, over our days, over such
indignities as time gave us all for our share,
the monstrous blue fender of Stocky's old Hudson
reels down the white line toward home.

FICTIONS

They make a song for their dogs up North,
four-letter words only, the kind
real dogs can use, bark-bark, woof-
woof, and so on—you know;
and every night they go to call
the big one—"Pavlov! Pavlov!"—
strictly home on obedient paths in the snow.

A song like that, or any temporary spot,
pitched cunningly to our minds, can
open the world again and again, lead
easily through our city the wildest stories,
make beautiful—young or old—all the faces,
and call us out to rejoice, wild even in
autumn, under the free-spending sycamores.

William Stafford

"Which one? The white or black?" Willy asked.

"White is good enough."

A mile later, Willy shouted: "Hey, Kramer, give a look who's stuck."

Jenkins, in his green fatigues, sat on the shoulder of the highway, next to the jalopy, which like some spent dragon, was exuding smoke from all its crevices. Jenkins was unscrewing everything that was removable from the defunct machine and his pockets were bulging.

Kramer pulled up.

"Hey, Jenkins," Willy asked, "What's up?"

"Up yours, you crook," Jenkins replied. "The ole bugger's through. Second gear's chewed up flatter n a pancake. You ain't getting a penny from me."

"What did you want for twenty bucks, a Rolls Royce. First of all, it's worth a good thirty. And secondly, the damn thing was working when I sold it."

Kramer went up to Jenkins, who was wielding his screw-driver madly.

"You pay twenty bucks for this wreck, Jenkins?"

"Twenty smackers. On credit."

"Will you sell it for five?"

"You nuts, Kramer?" Willy said. "It isn't worth a dime."

"I'll sell it," Jenkins said. "As long as I can take out the radio, the heater, the battery, the —"

"Look, Jenkins. Here's the five bucks and keep the car as a present. Only condition is you come with us to the Y and do what I tell you."

"No, sir. I ain't getting into no trouble with no white folks."

"Look," Kramer flashed his Y gift card. "These am Jewish Hebrew white folks. They'll take anyone in. Even you. In fact, I can invite anyone I like."

"Hey, Willy, you goin' too?"

"Yup."

"Well, Jenkins, you game?"

"If Willy is, then me too. What you want me to do?"

"Just be Willy's attendant and keep your big mouth shut."

In the car, Kramer filled in details.

At the outskirts of Peachtree, they saw a swiftly-moving cumulus cloud formation floating toward them. It made the temperature drop immediately. In the blue-aired distance were the fuzzy signs of rain.

They turned off the main road and followed a dusty path curling up a hill. Kramer drove to the back of the parking lot.

"Lord, you chaps've got a bloody fine place here," Willy said. "Cheerio. Look at those rolling green hills. Even peach trees and all that rot."

Kramer felt the enthusiasm racing through him again. "Boy do I feel great. I'm finally gonna burst out of my cocoon. So let's get into formation, pal. Got your Falasha facts down pat?"

Willy winked.

"How about you, Jenkins?"

"Just leave it to Gabriel Washington Roosevelt Jenkins."

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"Fine. Be back in a minute." Herb Kramer ran up the asphalt path to the pool gate. There a loudspeaker lulled the air with the soporific sound of strings. Despite the glitter of particolored bathing-suits and the rainbowed beach umbrellas, the people moved slowly, with a lassitude that hinted at carelessness. The water-muffled noises of screams and splashes made the atmosphere seem like a slow-motion dream.

Kramer approached a genial old white-haired lady collecting tickets at the gate. She smiled a greeting at him.

"Hi, Mrs. Loren."

"Why hello, Herb. How are you?"

"Fine," he said, noticing the peach trees. The fragrance of ripe fruit hovered like a sweet cloud. "How are you?"

"Just fine," she said.

"I'm going swimming."

Stuck for words, a haze came over Mrs. Loren's cheery politeness. Kramer shifted his legs impatiently, looking at the woman.

"What can I do for you?" she bleated softly.

"Oh. Can I bring a friend up? He's an Ethiopian Jew touring the country and he's —"

"We don't care if he's Jewish or not, silly," she said in her vowel-elastic drawl, patting her hair. "Any friend of yours is welcome here. After all, we're —"

"Check," Kramer said. "You're liberal. You never let race or creed or national origin stand in the way of your prejudices."

Flying down the hard-tar path to the car, he almost bumped into the colored handyman fixing a bench, and leaped over it just in time.

"It's all set, Willy. Come on, Jenkins. Take that crap outa your pants pockets, put on this black skullcap, and get into my white robe."

"No, sir. Jenkins ain't takin' nothing outa his pockets. Nohow. I ain't lettin' my parts outa my sight."

"You're gonna look pretty cute as a walking junkyard."

"Then I'll stay here."

"Okay, buster," Willy said. "You stay here and I'll tell the first sergeant that you stole the car."

"Kramer gave me the car as a present, Willy, and here's the five bucks to prove it."

"You goddam loon. You can't own a car twice that you didn't even pay for once."

"Truce, truce," Kramer shouted. "Let him come with the junk. I just got a great idea. Come on. Truce?"

"Truce," Willy said.

"Black actor nut," Jenkins said. But when Willy put his fist under Jenkins' chin, Jenkins yelled, "Truce. Truce it is."

"Then let's go, Willy. You wait a couple minutes, Jenkins, then you come up."

Willy bounded eagerly out of the seat and the two started up the path. When the handy-man noted Willy in his black trunks he came over and said, "Hey there, black boy, don't you know you ain't allowed up here? Git on over to the Jackson Street Y."

Willy gave him a regal look and waved him aside. He stopped a few feet from the gate. Kramer approached, trying to get Mrs. Loren's attention.

She turned. A polite white mask froze on her face. "You didn't say he was a nigra," she hissed.

"He isn't. He's a Falasha." Kramer beckoned to Willy. Willy's walk now became shy, round-shouldered, hesitant.

"This is Moses ben Amram. From Abyssinia."

"Addis Ababa," Willy corrected and bowed his head.

"Adisababa to you," Mrs. Loren nodded meekly. "Or as we say it in plain old English: hi!" She turned to Kramer, "Doesn't he speak American?"

"Yes, madam, I do. My father, the Jewish king of the Falashas, sent me to Oxford, England, don't you know." The warm cello tone had congealed into crisp British. He stuck out his hand and brought it near Mr. Loren's chin. She stepped back. Willy waved the hand in front of her. A subtle metamorphosis had taken place in Willy's stance. He now stood straight as a young palm tree, looking down imperially at Mrs. Loren.

"Go ahead," Kramer said, "It's part of the protocol for royal blood."

Mrs. Loren gingerly held the black hand and then brushed the side of her mouth over it, keeping a hairline between her lips and his skin. She fell back into her seat. Willy then swung his hand over to Kramer's mouth. For a frightened instant, as he saw the malicious grin lurking in Willy's eyes, Kramer saw white civilization crumbling. Stars revolved. Galaxies, light years away, soared by as he pressed his lips to the back of Willy's hand, expecting to be stung by what he swore was pungently aromatic black flesh. For a moment he held Willy's hand in his own and felt the electric shock of Willy's black blood flowing through and burning his lips.

"What's *that* coming up the walk?" Mrs. Loren asked.

"Oh, that's the prince's royal retainer. He's a deaf-mute, poor soul. Comes from a long line of deaf-mute and childless forebears. Nod to him."

Mrs. Loren nodded, then asked, "He's built sort of funny, isn't he?"

"'Shh," Kramer whispered. "That's canned food. His Highness, kosher to the core, loves to have a Jewish snack whenever the spirit moves him. He's just nuts about gefilte fish."

"And vice versa," Willy said and motioned to Jenkins to sit down.

Jenkins sat crosslegged outside the gate.

Some men came out of the locker room and stood nearby. Mrs. Loren wiped her mouth. She stood, tottered on her legs, and hastily introduced Willy. All the men stood paralyzed, as if pasted on a photograph. Finally someone suggested a tour of the facilities. Like a visiting dignitary Willy was guided from office to filter plant, from baseball field to locker room. When they reached the basement adjoining the locker room they wanted to stop but momentum propelled them on.

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It was too late. They could not hide in time the third bathroom labelled COLORED. Willy smiled understandingly. "Third sex, eh?"

Outside, Kramer looked up at the clouds, shielding his eyes from the hazy sun. "Come on, Moses," he said through his ash-tasting lips, "the water looks fine."

Willy followed Herb through the gate. He sniffed the chlorine air and stuck a toe into the water. "Ice cold," Willy said, retreating.

The swimmers and loungers stared at the Negro. All sounds stopped. The recorded music, it too ground to a scratched halt. Dangling legs swished noiselessly in the water. A young boy stood atop the high-diving board, immobile, framed against a blackening cloud. All looked Willy's way, except a woman without a face who was reclining on a chaise lounge.

She had chartreuse cream for cheeks, chin and forehead; a yellow plastic triangle for a nose; opaque blue glasses for eyes; and a frilled and flowered pink plastic bathing cap made in America for hair. The sudden silence made her peer over her glasses in fright. When she saw a stark naked black body dipping its toe gingerly into the pool she threw her head back and passed out.

Willy and Kramer exchanged a glance. Kramer turned to watch Mrs. Loren. She was in whispered conference with the men. They nodded gravely, whereupon Mrs. Loren blew a whistle and shrilled, "Rain coming. Everyone out of the water.

Twenty seconds later the pool was empty.

"Uh-oh," Willy said, "I smell trouble."

Willy turned. Mrs. Loren ran up to the two boys. "Rain coming. Pool rules. No swimming. The men here," she said, breathless, "thought you might like to give us a few words on the Falashas. Would you?"

"He really isn't prepared," Kramer said quickly. "Anyway, he's obliged to save it for his UJA lecture tour. I'm afraid we'll have to go now."

"Nonsense old chap. I'd like to give a brief speech."

"Folks," Mrs. Loren clapped her thin, blue-veined hands, "Yoo hoo. Every-one. We're going to hear about the black Jews of Falashaland. Over here, *ev-ery*-body. By the kiddie pool."

Almost all the women rose from their chaise lounges. From the ballfield middle-aged men came puffing in time to their assumed youthful jog. Some young mothers, bending over their children, warned silence into their ears. Everyone sat relaxed now, polite looks of interest smiling on their faces.

"You introduce him, Herby," Mrs. Loren said brightly, "you brought him."

Kramer cleared his throat and presented Moses ben Amram, son of the Jewish king of the Falashas.

They all applauded. Some last stragglers ran over from the hot dog stand, their feet sounding like seals' flappers on the pavement.

For a moment Willy called Kramer aside. "Those two Judas kisses," he whispered, "will make you all eat a healthy dose of Jim Crow. Actually," he said aloud, "I can't tell you much today. By agreement with the UJA," Willy looked at Kramer and winked, "I'm obliged to save my material for the cross-country tour so that information can elicit dollars for charity."

Everyone smiled knowingly, touched by Willy's properly Americanized business attitude.

"Although I appear black and negroid to you, I am really a Jew," Willy explained. "A Jew with a direct, more than 3000-year history which goes back to the times of King Solomon. We follow the same tradition as do other Jews. We love our neighbors. We know what it felt like being strangers and slaves in a strange land." He stopped for a moment, as if trying to recall what had to be said next. He looked from eye to eye with a subdued sardonic smile. "Would you believe it? I keep as many of the Jewish traditions as you do."

Kramer moved back, trying to get a better view of some of the stacked women. He caught Willy's eye and shook his head, trying to ask him to tone it down. But Willy stared right through him, talking about equal opportunities granted to Ethiopian Jews. "For instance, there's a friend of mine back home, the son of a simple butcher . . ."

"And you're a simple son of a bitch," Kramer silently mouthed the words, enraged at Willy's runaway enthusiasm.

". . . who is now Minister of Education to the Emperor of Ethiopia, the Lion of Judah, the King of Kings, his Beneficent Royal Highness, Haile Selassie."

Willy faced the cloud-covered sun and bowed slightly.

Someone raised a hand.

"No questions now, please. I have a question for *you.*" The pitch of Willy's voice rose. Needles of angry light shot out of his eyes, and a wave of discomfort soughed through the crowd. "Why, oh most persecuted race in history, do you cooperate in persecution? Are you antisemites? Then why are you antisemitic towards me? Oh People of the Book, I'm as good a Jew as any of you. I'm circumcised." Willy paused. "Don't you believe me?"

Kramer quickly invoked the gods and goddesses, black and white, fake and real, living and dead, hoping that Willy wouldn't attempt to prove his point.

"I keep the Sabbath. I worship God. I love my neighbor. So why have you used a skimpy cloud to deny me use of water?"

Through the silence the heavy tip-toeing of Abe Schulman, the Y director, was heard. He was a corpulent, owl-faced Northerner with a smile that seemed taped on. He sidled up to Kramer who jumped a foot when he suddenly heard a whisper in his ear: " Are you sure he's not a nigra, Herby?"

"I'm sure he ain't a nigra."

"God*dam* if he don't look like one."

"And you don't look like a Jew."

"Do you really think so?" Abe simpered, pleased. "I always thought I looked like a Jewish owl."

"I don't give a hoot what you look like. Main thing is you don't look Jewish."

"But I am."

"Well, so is he. And he don't look Jewish either.

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Get it?" Kramer spread his hands as a flourish to the logic. "He's from the Falasha royal line."

The director scratched his half-moon cheek. "Falasha? I had a pamphlet on them in my office. Disappeared into thin air."

"Yup," Kramer said quickly. "He's a goddam black Jewish prince."

The director rolled out toward the gate, muttering. "Black Jews. Now I've seen everything."

"All right," Willy was saying defiantly, "any more questions?"

No one had any. Some of the women stared at their feet, others shifted in their chairs in obvious discomfort. Mrs. Loren, looking a little like a bird pinned fluttering against a wall, emitted a brief hysterical giggle. The absence of noise brought the faceless woman to. She looked up and saw the same stark naked black body adorned with a skullcap and preaching to all the people who were respectfully seated around them with heads bowed in perfect and catastrophic silence the likes of which she could not remember at the pool that for the first time in creation had not a soul swimming in it. A twinge of pain and a wreath of chills corkscrewed through her as she realized why.

"My God," she screamed silently, falling into a chartreuse haze. It's the end of the world. The Messiah has come and he's black," and she passed out again.

Finally one of the women asked Willy timidly, "How do you like the USA?

"I love it," he said. "God bless America."

They applauded. Mrs. Loren went up to Herb Kramer. "You're an absolute angel for bringing him. Thanks ever so much," she said with trepidation. "He's such a clean-looking, patriotic young man. A hundred percent American. We should have more of his cultured type."

"Dozens."

A light drizzle began; it nubbed the skin as gently as snow. But on the opposite range of hills the sun was shining brightly, drying long strands of cobwebbed mist.

Willy walked over to Jenkins and beckoned him down the path.

"Hey, Willy," Jenkins whispered. "You gonna forget about the twenty bucks, ain't you?"

"Mind your manners, lackey, and button your lip. I ain't forgetting a thing."

"Okay, you've had it, Willy. They take you for a black Jewish king—watch what they take *me* for."

Jenkins ran back up the path. "Ladies and gents. I is the Angel Gabriel."

Kramer took one look at Jenkins and jumped up. "It's a miracle," he shuted. "Lord. It's a miracle. He's talking. He's talking. The Falasha prince blessed him and he's talking. Through his hat. But talking!"

Everyone took one look at Jenkins and moved to the other side of the pool, except Mrs. Loren, who, true soldier of the Y, refused to leave her post at the gate.

"I *is* the Angel Gabriel, goddammit. And I come to announce salvation." And he flicked the skirts of his white robe and extricated the horn of Willy's car.

"Honk ko-ax, honk ko-ax," the klaxon blared.

"I is the Angel Gabriel and I come to blow my horn. Wake up sinners."

And he blew it again. And again.

"What's this?" Willy whispered. "A new script."

"Son of a bitch is ad-libbing," Kramer said. Then shouting, "It's a miracle. The first of his line to speak."

The blaring klaxon brought the faceless woman to. "I is Gabriel," she heard, "the Angel of the Lawd. Sinners, git on up." She carefully opened the slit of one opaque, blue-glassed eye. "Oh my God," she thought. "It *is* the end of the world. I mean the *absolute* end. If His angel is black, then He, too—" and she passed out again.

Uh-oh, Kramer thought. The brainstorm is getting out of hand. Time to ring down the curtain.

Jenkins, having said his line several times, stood speechless now. Kramer came up to him and bowed, "Your Gabrielship," he said aloud, then pulled Jenkins aside, away from Mrs. Loren and Willy.

"Cut the horn crap, you jerk," he whispered. "Tell em to get into the water."

Jenkins looked at the horn. Tooted it once more.

"You screwed up, Jenkins," Kramer whispered. "You owe me five bucks and you can have the car back."

"Lawd," Jenkins did a jig. "I've got it twice already. This makes it three times. Hell, now she's really mine."

Mrs. Loren came over. Her eyes tightened. "Are you really a Falasha?" she asked Jenkins.

"Maam," Jenkins stuck his hands out.

She repeated, wavering, backing away from the extended fingers.

"You're very wise to back away, Mrs. Lorensky. Mortals aren't allowed to touch first-desk angels."

"If you mean religion, maam, I'm a Baptist, same as Willy here. I don't bother no man's belief and no one bothers mine."

"Falasha? Abyssinia?" she said.

"Ah be seein ya, too," he said. "Goodbye and good luck."

Jenkins strode up to Willy. "Hey Willy, what are you looking so mad about. You said it's worth thirty bucks. Gimme five and we'll call it quits, cause I just bought it back from Kramer for five bucks. What you lookin at me like that for, you black actor nut. It's

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as simple as ABC. First of all, I didn't buy the car from you, I loaned it. Second of all, it wasn't worth the money I paid. And third of all, I got it as a present from Kramer."

Kramer walked up to Willy. "Okay, Willy time to scoot."

Something tightened on Willy's face. He tilted his head at Kramer. "Had enough?" he hissed.

Kramer nodded. "Time to call it quits."

"Then get down on your knees, white man, and kiss my hand."

"Kiss my ass," Kramer turned and stepped away. The hummingbird had flown the coop; the glass was shivering. It wasn't at all what he had planned. He looked down the path and saw himself following it, getting into his car, divorcing himself from the whole freak affair. But he found his feet immobile. He turned and watched the two Negroes.

Jenkins was maneuvering around Willy, like a dog sniffing around for a possible mate. "What you say, Willy?"

"A-abe, oh A-abe," Mrs. Loren called.

The Y director waddled over. "What's going on here?"

"Come on, Willy," Jenkins was saying. "Gimme three bucks and you can have it. With the horn."

"Willy?" the director said, "I thought you said his name was Moses?"

Kramer looked at Willy's unfeeling eyes and grimaced. "Let's go."

"Hey black boy," the director blinked slowly. "Is your name *Willy?*" He turned to Kramer. "Did you bring a *shvartze* up here, you schmuck? Looking to write another story about our place?"

Willy shook himself free and stared over the director's head at a point beyond the sun. "My name is Moses ben Amram, son of the Falasha King of the Jews. I don't know what's wrong with these two. May I suggest sunstroke?"

Jenkins, the hardware rattling within him, danced in front of Willy. "Willy boy. This is your buddy, Jenkins, speaking. Gabriel Washington Roosevelt Jenkins. Mechanic Motor Pool. Specialist Second Class. United States Army. You gone clean outa your black skull? Man, what we doing here in a white man's Hebrew YMCA anyway?"

Willy turned calmly, head erect, to the director. "Kindly tell this sunstricken native to cease his tribal display. Lord of the universe," he glanced quickly upward," the things one miracle will do to a Falasha."

Violently, with acrobatic grace, Jenkins leaped into the air, arms and legs in complex gyration. "Jeez, if you're a Falasha, by God, then so am I."

"Excuse me," the director insisted. Sweat glistened out of the corner of his eyelids, like tears. "Are you a Falasha or not?"

Willy looked through him.

"You better tell us, boy, if you are or if you aren't," the director repeated. "For if you're not, you'd better—"

Willy lifted his head and looked down his nose with disdain. He took a deep breath and spoke loudly, as if wanting those behind the gate to hear. "I've never been so humiliated." He started walking away, then whirled, pointing. "The Ethiopian Embassy in Washington will hear of this denial of my identity."

"And so will its Mission in Atlanta," said Kramer, "and xerox copies are gonna be made for every lousy third secretary in every consulate."

Willy shuffled back, his face sculpted into rage. He stood before the director. "What is your name, sir?"

"Abe Schulman," he said, off balance. He blinked and his eyes disappeared for a moment. "I'm awfully sorry if—"

"Speak clearly," said Kramer. "I'm taking down every word."

"Proper steps shall be taken," Willy said. "I've visited Jewish communities the world over. Why everybody knows I'm the son of the black Jewish king. Here. Watch." He extended his fingers to Herb Kramer. Kramer, anxious to get away, bowed, wearily pressed his lips to Willy's hand. But this time it didn't taste as black or as ashen. A triumphant glint shone in Willy's eyes, a look of transfigured blaze.

Ennervated, feeling that his insides had by now been scooped out and refilled with sawdust, Kramer trailed Willy down the path to the parking lot. Jenkins took long loping strides to keep up with the two. He jumped into the back seat and, like some big machine spitting screws, bolts, and wrenches, began taking himself apart.

From the pool came the sound of a whistle, a long pent-up sigh finally released. "Back into the water," someone whooped.

Kramer started the car. He glanced back at the pool and up at the still cloudy sky. Except for a few scattered drops, the drizzle was almost gone. The noises of diving and of children screaming filtered through the splashing water and merged into a green-shaded summer drone.

"Hop in," Kramer said.

"Apologize. You called me a Negro in front of all those people."

"All right. Can the cockney. My hunch was right. Now enough."

"You too deny my identity?"

Kramer frowned. There wasn't a trace of a smile on Willy's lips. He adjusted his skullcap and wheeled away, a perverse puppet with a spiteful will. What

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should he do now?. Kramer wondered. The stubborn latrine streak had latched onto Willy again.

"Willy Thompson. You're a Negro. Be proud of it, goddammit. What's wrong with you?" Kramer gripped Willy's shoulders and shook him.

"I'm a Falasha," he said, "the son of a black Jewish king."

Kramer took a deep breath and sent up another quick prayer for his own safety. "You're a nigger," he spat out and slapped Willy hard on the face.

Abe Schulman and the other men—a committee with one mind and a dozen legs—came hurrying down to the parking lot. "I saw that. Once and for all now. Let's get this straight. Herby, you're causing one hell-uva mess today. Cause the Peachtree police are gonna be called up here in a minute. Are you a Falasha, or not?"

Willy was rubbing his face, breathing fiercely through his mouth.

"He's a Falasha," Kramer said wearily. "He's one of us, dammit. Now quit hounding him. We're leaving."

A light crackled in Willy's eyes like a candle sputtering for life. With nostrils flaring and lips moving wordlessly he looked up slowly into the men's eyes, roving from eye to eye.

"Well? Well?" Abe Schulman demanded. "I want to hear it from *you*. Are you a Falasha?"

"I am what I am," Willy shouted at them in his own voice, "Your white eyes paint me. You baptize me in black blood forever. You know what I am. You see what I am." The crystal notes vibrated in that rich cello tone, low and sonorous and full of sorrow.

And Willy cleaved a path between Kramer and Abe Schulman, pushing them roughly aside, blazing up the slope to the pool gate, through the pool gate, past Mrs. Loren to the edge of the pool. He hovered for a moment at the pool's edge. He curled his toes around the white tile. He saw the stares of all the swimmers converging on him. Then with a cry of triumph he made a perfect soundless dive into the rising water.

THE CORPSE OF AN OLD WOMAN

It has been lying on a braided rug
with a teacup in its hand since yesterday
at supper-time, and the neighbor-ladies shrug
and say "She lets the lights burn night and day."

Its cat sits in the window, watching birds,
and the phone rings now and then, mistakenly;
the mailman bangs the box-lid to be heard;
Someone may stop this afternoon for tea.

Ted Kooser

Letters From Santa

Ray Puechner

Kris Kringle Toy Co.
11 Holly Road
North Star, Alaska

U. S. Government
Division of Social Security
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

In 1957 I relocated my business here in Alaska and became a resident thereof. Since the admission of Alaska to statehood in 1959 I have been a citizen of the United States. Being over 65, I find that I am eligible to receive social security benefits.

My Brownies and I have come to the conclusion that, in view of the hard work I have done in the past and with the advent of such large toy companies as Mattel, Remco, and Ideal, I am really no longer needed and should enjoy the rest of my life in retirement.

Most sincerely,

S. Claus
Social Security No. 338-32-2301

U. S. Government
Division of Social Security
Washington, D. C.

Mr. S. Claus
Kris Kringle Toy Co.
11 Holly Road
North Star, Alaska

Dear Mr. Claus:

Our office has received your letter of request for social security benefits and is forwarding the necessary application forms. In the meantime we will make the usual investigation of your records.

Sincerely,

John Davis
4th Assistant to the Secretary
Claims Division

FROM THE DESK OF JOHN DAVIS—
CONFIDENTIAL MEMO:

Notify Bureau of Internal Revenue to examine tax returns of S. Claus and Kris Kringle Toy Co. Our files contain no record of having received any employer payments for social security or unemployment compensation from the Kris Kringle Toy Co., yet Mr. Claus speaks of a group, called Brownies, which he apparently employs.

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Have FBI run standard security check on Mr. Claus and his Brownie following. Check for possible evidence the group is an extremist propaganda organization or a Communist front organization operating from northern Alaska.

Kris Kringle Toy Co.
11 Holly Road
North Star, Alaska

U. S. Government
Division of Social Security (Att: John Davis)
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

For the past three days I have been hounded by a member of your staff, who has been out here asking all sorts of stupid questions. My Brownies, of course, are paid no salary and cannot be termed employees. They are my adopted children. This investigator also tells me I will be ineligible for social security benefits if my income exceeds $1200 a year. As my income has never been greater than $812 in any given year, I don't see why he brought it up in the first place. And another thing — the Kris Kringle Toy Co. doesn't bring me any money to speak of. I give away most of the stuff. I don't understand what all the fuss is about. It's a damn fool way to run a government if you ask me.

Sincerely,
S. Claus

BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE REPORT

(Att: John Davis)

We have carefully audited the income tax returns of Mr. S. Claus and the Kris Kringle Toy Co. for the years 1959 to date. Although Mr. Claus and the Kris Kringle Toy Co. do millions of dollars worth of business each year, vast amounts are given to charitable organizations such as: schools, hospitals, etc. We have verified these donations by checking with the recipients of said donations. Mr. Claus still receives a sizable income from his business, but, because of claiming 42 dependents, has never paid any taxes. The largest amount of taxable income he has ever had was $812 in 1961. Our records further show that he has made social security payments since 1959. (See attached records for complete details.)

Our field investigator reports that the 42 dependents are indeed the adopted children of Mr. Claus and that no violation of the Child Labor Laws has been committed.

Since Mr. Claus and the Kris Kringle Toy Co. are involved in interstate commerce, however, a violation of the Civil Rights Law is possible.

FBI REPORT (Att: John Davis)

We find no evidence that Mr. Claus has been associated with any organization listed on the Attorney General's list as subversive and no evidence of any criminal record.

U. S. Government
Division of Social Security
Washington, D. C.

Mr. S. Claus
Kris Kringle Toy Co.
11 Holly Road
North Star, Alaska

Dear Mr. Claus:

Pending an investigation of a possible violation of the Civil Rights Law by the Kris Kringle Toy Co. which we find has indulged in interstate commerce, we are holding your application. Have you at any time employed a Negro? If not, why not?

If we find everything in order, you may eventually receive a maximum monthly payment of $102.34. However, our investigation is, as yet, far from complete.

Sincerely,
John Davis

Kris Kringle Toy Co.
11 Holly Road
North Star, Alaska

U. S. Government
Division of Social Security (Att: John Davis)
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I am now and always have been a registered Democrat.

S. Claus.

U. S. Government
Division of Social Security
Washington, D. C.

S. Claus
Kris Kringle Toy Co.
11 Holly Road
North Star, Alaska

Dear Mr. Claus:

Enclosed find your monthly social security check in the amount of $102.34.

RAY PUECHNER'S light pieces appear in *The North American Review* spasmodically. Ray is currently assembling a collection of previously published humor pieces under the title *The LSD and Sex and Censorship and Vietnam Cookbook.*

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THE BOY WHO LOVED SHAKESPEARE

M. J. Bosse

Facing the desk of the Headmaster's secretary, with the court of Dukes and Earls gathered decorously around him, and with his three daughters Cordelia, Goneril, and Regan bowing dutifully, the small boy sat erect and kingly on the bench. He looked at his hands until they trembled. He concentrated on his facial muscles until they relaxed and became loose. He knew this much, that he was the King of Britain, called Lear, and that he was very old. He knew exactly what would happen. He knew that two of his daughters would turn against him, that, in fact, one of them would order his death, and the third one, the good one with the excellent soft voice, would die because of him, and other people suffer, and all because he was a bad old man. Knowing all would happen as planned, he had to try very hard not to feel sorry for himself until the proper time.

After a few minutes of the lesser action had been thought out, the boy got up and staggered to the window. He drew himself up painfully to his full height and said in a loud but quavering voice:

"BLOW WINDS, AND CRACK YOUR CHEEKS! RAGE! BLOW! YOU CATARACTS AND HURRICANES, SPOUT TILL YOU HAVE DRENCH'D OUR STEEPLES, DROWN'D THE COCKS!"

When the small boy intoned these words, the Headmaster's secretary, a bent old man, was wrenched from a day-dream of the past and nearly fell out of his chair. The boy remained at the window, his mouth moved but without a sound. The words were interior now that he had become aware of his daughter's full betrayal. In the lovely spring daylight flooding in from the school quadrangle, the boy's eyes reflected his created agony.

"Naturally all boys go through stages," the Headmaster was explaining. "Some of them become lions and tigers for a time, even snakes, and quite frequently they assume the character of elves and goblins. What I am trying to say is that boys, all boys, have lively imaginations."

"What *are* you trying to say?" The pretty woman got abruptly to her feet, with a jangle of bracelets preceding her to the office window. "Whatever you are trying to say, you sure aren't saying it."

"Well, Mrs. Randolph, it is simply this. We cannot handle him in his present condition."

She laughed scornfully. "I don't believe it—IMMANUEL SCHOOL admits it can't handle something." She looked out of the window, across the green lawn of the quad. "I brought him here because I heard you *could* handle him." She watched four boys cross beneath the window at a crisp military tempo, their small bodies erect and disciplined in the braided uniforms. "I just can't understand why this didn't do the trick."

"From our point of view, Mrs. Randolph, it is a matter of facilities. We aren't equipped for this sort of thing, I mean, we don't have the special staff required to . . . give James the proper attention. Of course, later on, after he has had whatever help is necessary, we do want him back. He'll have his old room. After a leave of absence a boy loves to have his old room back."

Mrs. Randolph had a jeweled cigarette lighter in her hand and was waving it impatiently in circles. "All *right,*" she said. "Get him packed and I'll scoot him out of here."

"Mrs. Randolph, if you have a few moments," said the Headmaster, "I consider it my duty to give you the facts, since this is all quite extraordinary."

She flicked the lighter on and off, while the Headmaster settled back in his swivel chair, as he did before delivering a reprimand."

"Six months ago you brought James to us. Unfortunately, with your other commitments you haven't been able to visit, and consequently you are, so to speak, unaware of James' activities."

"I had reports on him elsewhere, remember? So skip the usual."

"I hardly know what you mean by usual."

Now she turned toward him, waving the lighter. "Petty thefts, fighting, lying, cheating . . . God knows. You can skip all that."

"Yes. Well, there was a period of what you term 'all that.' But it passed rather quickly. At IMMANUEL, Mrs. Randolph, we have a system which is quite effective in that regard."

"Do you have a cigarette? I'm all out."

The Headmaster unlocked a desk drawer where he kept private things—a picture of his dead wife with sentimental writing on it, a few joke cards, and a hunting license—and he took out a pack of Luckies from under some papers. "After a few months," the Headmaster leaned forward to light the woman's cigarette, smelling the scent that hovered around her, watching her petulant small mouth form an O to exhale the first drag of smoke, "I would say within four months, we had a fine new James here."

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"A new James," repeated Mrs. Randolph with a giggle. "Pardon me, but my husband always used that: I'm a new James, darling."

"Well, I would say your *son* James made creditable adjustment. He was quiet and polite—that's what the reports attest to. Then his class began the study of Shakespeare." The Headmaster picked up a sheaf of papers and adjusted his glasses. "The basic tenet of IMMANUEL is that the boys should be exposed early to the Great Works . . ." He paused and glanced at the pretty woman; she was watching herself blow large well-defined smoke rings. "Yes, well . . ." began the Headmaster. "At any rate, I have here a statement prepared for you by Mr. Boylan. I shall read it."

"Why not," said Mrs. Randolph.

"The statement of Francis A. Boylan concerning James Randolph Junior. I, Francis A. Boylan, am an instructor in English at the IMMANUEL SCHOOL FOR BOYS. On the ninth of October I initiated the study of Shakespeare in a class which James Randolph attended. Since James Randolph had been, until then, a rather indifferent student, I was surprised to note with what avidity he read his *Midsummer Night's Dream.* On that first day he was exceptionally attentive, and thereafter he often posed queries, which had not been his practice before. For the three weeks that we studied the play James Randolph was by and large the most responsive student in class. His diligent use of reference books, which I carefully selected—"

"This teacher likes to throw himself bouquets, doesn't he," observed Mrs. Randolph.

The Headmaster rustled the papers, at last showing his irritation, which caused the woman to smile.

"James Randolph," the Headmaster read on, "seemed to understand more than he could reasonably be expected to understand at his age, and one day he quite awed the class, and myself too, by reciting an entire speech, absolutely verbatim and with astonishingly lifelike gestures. Of course, for me it was a satisfying experience. When one of my boys does independent work, then for me my vocation takes on new meaning, new dimension. When, however, we left Shakespeare for Pope, another and less commendable change took place in James. He became indifferent again, and so withdrawn that I felt it my duty to speak to him. I went one evening to his room for "an IMMANUEL talk" and, upon opening the door, was shocked to see James squatting on top of the highboy. He was stark naked, his hair tangled, his expression nothing less than impish. I choose my words judiciously and still find them appropriate. James stared at me for a moment, then nodded as though in acknowledgement of something I might have said. Then he leapt off the highboy and skipped with alacrity to the window. On the sill, squatting there, he turned his head to me and said in a most musical voice, *'I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes.'* Then James jumped." The Headmaster paused and self consciously adjusted his glasses. "That was when James broke his ankle."

"Simply jumped out the window," Mrs. Randolph exclaimed, twisting her cigarette out fiercely in the ashtray the Headmaster had placed beside her.

"Incidentally," said the Headmaster, "although James did not take much interest in the electric train you sent him upon that . . . occasion, I took the liberty of adding it to the game room, with James' permission of course, and the other boys have enjoyed it quite a lot."

"What can you do with a boy who jumps right out a window?" Mrs. Randolph repeated. "And everyone blames you for it," she said, her lower lip slightly trembling.

The Headmaster stared at her a moment. He then sat a little straighter and tightened his lips confidently.

"The report continues," he read. "I (that is, Mr. Boylan) felt it necessary to consult James' roommates and other chums. I was able to discover that in past weeks James Randolph had assumed an evening personality of strange and rather alarming proportions. By some accounts he had been observed cavorting—I use that term judiciously—cavorting on the quadrangle after lights out. One report, in fact, had him dancing naked down the path that leads to our school arboretum."

Here Mrs. Randolph interrupted. "The son of his father all right."

"May I continue, Mrs. Randolph?"

Her eyes widened in surprise. "Oh I didn't figure on more."

"There is more," the Headmaster said primly. "There is more, and it is my duty to give you all the facts."

"That one report seemed rather enough. James has been acting up and you think he needs a psychiatrist. I see. I've had psychiatrists. They're not worth a damn."

The Headmaster rustled another sheet of paper. "If you would be so kind as to hear out another report, I think you will find something additional in it. *The statement of Rodney M. Mordopp concerning James Randolph Junior.* 'My name is Rodney M. Mordopp. I am a mathematics and science instructor at Immanuel School for Boys, Mount Orr, Pennsylvania. In class I have had the aforementioned James Randolph Junior. He has been an indifferent student, receiving at the first marking this term a 73.4, which is slightly below class average. The morning of 16 April I observed that James Randolph was behaving in an abnormal manner. Seated in the back row, he was laughing, as if to himself, and, it appeared, was drinking from an imaginary cup. He was involved in conversation too, although with whom it was quite impossible to say. I had the odd feeling, though I cannot substantiate this thesis, that James Randolph was not aware of being in my class. So disconcerted was I that I intended speaking to him after the period. To my surprise, upon the ringing of the bell, James came toward my desk by his own volition, walking, or it can be best be described as staggering, as if he were simultaneously out of

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M. J. BOSSE is a candidate for the PhD at NYU. Doubleday published his novel *The Journey of Tao Kim Nam* in 1959.

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breath and intoxicated. He drawled as he spoke to me. I judge that James was trying for a manner of speech, a specific manner which he had not yet mastered. Again I was disconcerted when he said: *What is honour? A word. What is in that word honour? What is that honour? AIR. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday.* I have copied the direct quotation from Mr. Boylan's copy of *Henry Fourth.*' That," said the Headmaster, "was Falstaff." He held up his hand in a peremptory gesture, when Mrs. Randolph began to say something.

"Now here is a statement from one of James' roommates. He is a quiet reliable chap with whom we placed James recently, when the . . . strange behavior began. We had hoped—You see, Mrs. Randolph, we have exhausted possibilities. Would you care for another cigarette?" When Mrs. Randolph declined with a slow wag of her head, the Headmaster lit one for himself. "This report," he said, "is written in the boy's own phrasing. *Statement of John Truslow Potts concerning James Randolph Junior.* 'I am Johnny Potts and I am Jimmy Randolph's roommate at school. Jimmy does some funny things and all the boys say so too. He did a funny thing one night, I walked into the room and he was sitting in a chair and I spoke to him and he jumped up and he shouted something loud. Then he fell right down and held his heart and acted dead. He did not get up either. So some other boys and me helped him up. He was all right then and he could stand by himself. I asked him what was he shouting and he said something like YOU BRUTE! I asked him, Jimmy, what was that for anyway. He just sort of smiled and kept breathing hard, so I kept clear of him like all the other boys do too. Then one day after that, Jimmy came into the room and he took a garden snake out of his pocket and held it at his chest. The snake was not biting him or anything but he acted like it was, and he told me in a funny voice to go and get him a robe and crown or something and he said he had immoral longings. I asked him, what was that you got, Jimmy, but he just slumped down in a chair and looked like he was going to die again. That is all I have to say about Jimmy. But I would like to say he is a nice friend even if he does these funny things.' "

The Headmaster tapped a pencil slowly, in disciplinary time upon the desk top. "I assume, Mrs. Randolph, you can recall, from your own school days, what is alluded to in the statement. The first, of course, was the assassination scene in *JULIUS CAESAR,* and the other came from *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.* Though my Shakespeare is not infallible," he continued, "I think James was doing the scene in which Cleopatra commits suicide. The lines to which young Potts refers are: *Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have immortal longings in me.*"

"But what's it all mean?" Mrs. Randolph was suddenly on her feet, pacing. "It's not just ham."

The Headmaster agreed with a nod.

"Is it genius? It could be, you know. He's a genius," Mrs. Randolph exclaimed. "My boy's a genius." She threw her arms wide in dramatic assertion. "Genius! Why, it's the damn truth. After all, his father was a smart operator. When he wasn't chasing skirts he was reading books." She leaned over the desk. "Of course, a genius! No one's to blame, he's just too damn smart for his own good!"

The Headmaster shook his head. "Even if he were a genius, there is something else operating here. Here is the final report," he rustled another paper. "*Statement of Doctor T. R. O. Washburn concerning James Randolph Junior.* 'I am Doctor T. R. O. Washburn, retained by the Immanuel School as resident physician. After events in which your son was involved came to my attention, I gave him a series of physical tests to which he responded normally. Moreover, although I had expected there was a possibility of some kind of aberration to be indicated by his emotional behavior, I felt that in that regard too, James Randolph appeared to be, as far as limited observation could ascertain and without a more exhaustive series of psychological tests to be given in conjunction with a specially trained tester, normal enough. But then, two days after I had examined him for physical malfunction, I was passing through a dormitory hall and heard a great deal of shuffling and laughter in one of the rooms. Outside the door I listened a moment to ascertain if I should investigate. I certainly heard, 'Look at him eat those weeds! and: 'Look, he's going to crack that nut in his teeth!' I opened the door and in the instant before the whole scene changed, I witnessed this event: a group of boys were gathered in a circle and in the center of it crouched James Randolph, his mouth stuffed with weeds, sticks, and mud. His face was twisted and, above all—this struck me—he seemed oblivious to everything around him. It was no stunt that he was doing for the boys, since, upon my entry, they all scattered. He was simply doing it for himself. He chewed, mumbled for at least a minute, and then slowly and methodically he picked the foul mess from his mouth and stood erect and said quite nonchalantly: Good evening, Doctor. As I watched him I felt that right before my eyes this boy was changing, or perhaps to be more accurate, returning.' "

"Mud? Weeds?"

"He was no doubt doing Caliban from the *Tempest.*" The Headmaster drummed his fingers on the desk for emphasis. "Oh don't you see, Mrs. Randolph, how far he has gone! We found in his room the Complete Works of Shakespeare that has been missing from the school library for months. But the crux of the whole affair is in the last paragraph of Doctor Washburn's report: 'The boy's problem is, of course beyond my scope as a general practitioner, and I feel therefore that it is imperative that James Randolph be put immediately (the Headmaster interjected here that the word immediately was underlined in the report) immediately under the care of an established psychiatrist, a few of whom, if I may, I can recommend for your consideration.' " The Headmaster put down the report. "And yet, Mrs. Randolph, it might not have been necessary to send for you so urgently, if James had not threatened the entire fabric of the school's phil-

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BELIEVING

Late at night you turn to chalk,
tense and listening—the house
a menagerie of sounds.
All casual lies surface—

a remark overheard
on a playground, some grandmother's
cruel information—
and you believe. Magic works. Dreams

foretell the future. Your palms
speak to you—fingerprints
are semaphores of disaster,
callous and blister are codes,

scars send messages, and the lifeline
pulls you toward doom
like a magnet. Beyond the corner
of your eye mongrels

become unicorns, cats bare
sabre-teeth, wolves pad
the upstairs hall, ravenous.
All over town babies are born

with rabbit ears. Poltergeists
hide in the woodshed
among slivers and sawdust.
Darkness nurses all

this old ballast alive.
Your street is a wilderness
and you would run out
if only you could climb over

the monumental and seething flagstones
or escape the hooves
of the wild-eyed rocking horse
straining to join his herd.

Vern Rutsala

osophy and ultimately endangered the very lives of the boys." The Headmaster waited for these words to have their proper effect. "You see, we have discovered that James has, by certain methods, managed to convey to other boys the intent, if somewhat inaccurately, of a few quite indelicate passages. We can not have that. We can not, at any cost, have that. And last night came the piece de resistance, so to speak—James almost suffocated a youngster, put a pillow over the boy's head and called him Desdemona." The Headmaster waited for the woman to say something, but she just sat there, white faced and rigid. "I have James waiting in the anteroom. I'll send for him." The Headmaster opened the door and spoke a few moments to the secretary. Then he turned to Mrs. Randolph. "Excuse me," he said frowning. "James has gone to the washroom down the hall."

Soon the Headmaster returned and stopped at his secretary's desk. "Mr. Wells, did he say anything, when he left?"

"He asked me if I knew about flowers. I don't quite remember . . . yes, he asked if I knew anything about pansies."

"Anything else?"

The old man smiled in good natured acknowledgement of a failing memory. "Let's see . . . Oh yes, I think he said it was a challenge. Struck me odd he would use a word like that.

"A challenge?"

"Yes, he said being a crazed girl was a challenge. That boy, sir, is very peculiar. Said being a crazy girl was a challenge. Well I guess."

Mrs. Randolph had come into the anteroom. The Headmaster turned toward her. "James told my secretary he was going to the washroom, and that was twenty minutes ago."

"What about flowers?" she asked him.

"Yes, that is what I am wondering . . ." Suddenly his eyes widened.

"Well?" Mrs. Randolph demanded.

"You must have read *Hamlet*—or seen the movie."

"I saw the movie, yes, I—"

"Ophelia," the Headmaster said. Even you must know what happened to Ophelia." He was staring out of the window, past the quadrangle, past the other red brick buildings, to the school arboretum beyond.

A stone fence separated the school arboretum from the woodland of a country estate. The boy scrambled over it, then stooped to pick a dandelion. Now he had mallows, trilliums, buttercups, and a dandelion. Over the rise was a lake. "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance," he said in a faltering voice. "Pray love, remember; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts."

Mincing and swaying he reached the top of the hill, where he halted and looked down at the lake gleaming in the sunlight. His head wagged and drooped a little when he turned, as to someone, and said, *"I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died."* He sighed deeply and let some of the flowers fall from his hand. *"They say he made a good end."* As he descended the hill toward the lake, whose bank was mossy and canopied with birch, he hummed softly and tried sticking some trilliums in his hair, but it was cropped too short and the flowers fell out.

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The Compleat "In" Opera Guide

Howard Clifford

Since the "War on Poverty" campaign is off to such a splendid start (our Regional Director has already won his own private little skirmish—he gets 18 grand a year) we can soon expect to see a huge increase in the number of TV sets in use; and because the promotion of a "Better Society" is bound to have an uplifting effect on television's future programing, we can anticipate more live and taped operatic performances and less of the present fare of Westerns, Private Eyes, Situation Comedies, and Ear, Nose and Throats.

In order to aid viewers in understanding and appreciation this loftier entertainment there is hereby outlined a brief résumé of some of the most popular operas which will be soon forthcoming on the major networks.

Rigoletto. Joe Verdi wrote this and sold it to a music publisher who first had it performed in Venice's Teatro la Fenice, on March 11, 1891, a long time ago. *Rigoletto* has been quite justifiably popular through the years. Characters include a Duke, a hunchback, an assassin and a beautiful girl, Gilda. This opera is quite complete. It includes murders, suicides and almost endless illicit lovemaking. The best aria is "La donna e mobile" from which General Motors took the name for one of their automobiles as it means: "Donna drives an Oldsmobile." Caruso made his Metropolitan debut in *Rigoletto* on November 24, 1903. He had a good voice, could carry a tune well—probably practiced all the time he was on that island.

Madame Butterfly. Giacomo (no relation to 'Perry') Puccini wrote the music and two other chaps wrote the libretto. It is about a detective agency man who joins the U. S. navy and indulges in a little extra curricular hanky-panky with a Japanese broad, abroad, while his wife is home in the U.S.A. doing cross-word puzzles and figuring out the bridge problems in the World-Tely. His name is Benny Pinkerton, an unlikely combination, and the maid in Japan's name is CIO_2 San, or Damp Hospital. She gets an awful headache and upset stomach when she finds out that Ben has a legal wife elsewhere, and does not care to live with her and young Benny. In fact, she gets the sads so bad that she takes her Dad's fish scaler and removes her own appendix, liver and gizzard, while singing the famous "Un bel di." That's a beautiful melody, and goes: Tum, tum, tum, tum, tum, tum; tum, tum, tum, tum, tum; tum, tum, tum, tum. Like that. This opera is well worth seeing, especially if Stand-up Stevens is in it.

Fledermas. This is an important work except for one thing. It was written by seer Johnny Strauss, who even as far back as 1874 was accurately able to forsee one of our present day curses, and warned us in the title of the opera to turn off the Sullivan show when Topio Gigio was scheduled. *Fledermaus* has no dwarfs or weirdos and did not become too popular due to the lack of infidelities and the fact that the murderers did in the proper parties, which doesn't sit too well with opera

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HOWARD CLIFFORD lives in St. Catherines, Ontario. His work has appeared in *Coronet, American Legion,* and Canadian magazines.

JOAN BRAY AT RAINBOW HOSPITAL

We knew your independent
Temper right away. But where

Did it take shape? Only five—
Much too young for an old man's

Disease, your awkward points bulged
With arthritic knobbiness.

Unruled by hospital
Conformities, chronic patient,

You never could develop
A needed immunity

To mere reiteration.
Day after day the daily

Shot still sent you scuttling down
Beneath your bed. Caught at last,

You flailed and raged against us:
Daily captors: enemies.

You could have fought the world.
Only a little later,

No longer your opponent,
Sitting at bedside, I wrote

Your letter: "The sky is blue,
The grass is green, the flowers

Red, the sunshine yellow,
So why is Joan Bray black?"

I wrote it down. You gave me
No address, and had no stamp.

Mary C. Woerner

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lovers. I'd rate this one better than 'rotten' but not quite as good as 'dandy'.

Pagliacci. Pronounced, co-incidentally, just like my brother-in-law's name, Paul Yawchi. This opera is full of jealous rages and sexual betrayals. Written by Reggie Leoncavallo. The best known aria occurs about the middle of the thing, "Vesti la giubba," which means literally, "Little Hebrew Vest" and figuratively, "The Show Must Go On." "Saturday Night at the Opera" on any major network could well be the downfall of many a financial empire now shored up with residuals, should *Pagliacci* be featured.

Tosca. Pucc' wrote this one too. He was a regular 19th century Irving Berlin. His two accomplices in the Butterfly caper swiped most of the libretto from Victorien Sardou's play, "La Tosca," and the title didn't cover their plagiaristic tracks too well; but this was in Rome, and you know how it was over there, a few years ago. In this opera a police chief catches an artist helping a fugitive escape. He invites the artist's girl friend, Tosca, up to his apartment and makes a rather complicated deal with her. It is so mixed up that they all forget their parts: the artist is slain; the fuzz stabbed in the heart; and Tosca jumps off a high rise castle wall. Don't change to another channel if Tosca is playing! The best aria is "Vissi d'arte" which means, "Vissi d'arte."

Cavalleria Rusticana. (Rusty Cigarette) Music by Pete Mascagni, (no relation to 'James') words by G. Menasci and G. Targioni-Tozzetti. All Italians by trade. The heroine, a Miss Santuzza, has the same bad luck as what's her name in *Madame Butterfly*. (There were no pills at all, then.) She gets excommunicated because of her bad luck, and to make matters worse, her boy friend starts running around with another guy's wife because of the way things are shaping up with her. Annoyed, she tells her husband everything, and he bumps off his wife's former boy friend, in a very pregnant scene. This opera is a real mess, emotionally, but there is some very good singing in a bit played in one Mamma Lucia's saloon.

Carmen. By Georges Bizet. The first performance was in Paris, March 3, 1875. Micaela, a country girl, has a fiancé in the dragoons, (part cop and part soldier), who has to pick up Carmen, the heroine, who has done a little stabbing job in a smoke shop. However, Carmen is prettier than Gina L. or Barbra S., and naturally escapes, and her would be captor goes himself to the clink. However, love smote him a speedy blow, and she vows to wait for him. To put in the waiting time, Bizet ran in a toreador, for a spare lover, a smugglers' band, and had the farm girl reappear to sing, "Je dis que rien ne m'epouvants." I have no idea what THAT means! To end this opera Georges had Don, the very unreluctant dragoon released from prison, and he asked Carmen how about it, and when she said "No!" *he* stabbed *her,* which was a shame. This is a very good opera.

"Yes, Virginia,-- There Is A Twentieth Century."

Allan C. Brownfeld

There is no way to prevent summer from following spring, and even if we sought such a result and pursued it, we would fail, and our failure would not be a failure of the will, or of the spirit. It would simply be in the nature of things.

How many good men and good causes have died because they arose before their time? These are lamented and periodically are exhumed for the benefit of the future seers and prophets of eras now only in our imagination. Yet, how many good men and good causes have died because they arose after the time in which they might be permitted to thrive and prosper? These are neither lamented nor mourned. Their demise is also in the nature of things. It is a kind of

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A frequent contributor to NAR, ALLAN C. BROWNFELD received his A.B. from the College of William and Mary and his law degree from Marshall-Wythe School of Law. He was a member of the editorial staffs of the *Virginia Gazette* and the *Houston Press,* and was the recipient of a *Wall Street Journal* Foundation Award. He has been a member of the faculty of St. Stephens School, Alexandria, Virginia. His articles have appeared in *The Commonweal, Modern Age, University Bookman, Motive, The Churchman and* other publications.

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"proof" that men do not really control their environment, but are controlled by it. Perhaps it is the modern "realization" that Man and not God is supreme, and perhaps the tragedy of our time is that this is not true, and that we may never find it out.

Our modern world has been characterized in many ways. It is an age of computers and technology, of soaring achievement in science, of growing affluence. Yet it is an age of sadness, because we expect too many rewards for what we do, and the rewards are not of the kind that our efforts can produce. If a man resists the trend toward centralization in the name of total problem solving, he is a reactionary. If a man believes that some problems are inherent in the fiber of life itself, he is not modern in his thinking. If a man has a pride of place, a feeling for the land, a love for history and its lessons, he is a hopeless renegade against the twentieth century.

The world now knows it, so there is no harm in proclaiming it again: Virginia has joined the twentieth century. It did so by less than an overwhelming majority. In fact, the twentieth century only barely made it. But, as Thomas Wolfe pointed out, you can't go home again, and what is done is done. The question is, what does it mean—not only for Virginia, for its meaning here will be slow in coming and carefully disguised behind the colonial facade of another era, but for all of us.

In a sense it can be argued that the result of the Virginia Democratic primary of July, 1966 was not in itself a repudiation of the traditional conservatism that has enveloped the Old Dominion's politics since the birth of the Republic.

Such critics argue that these results were a response to two important political phenomena: (1) Howard Smith's congressional district had fallen victim to reapportionment, and instead of a predominantly rural constituency the "Judge" found himself with thousands of Washington suburbanites in Fairfax County. Smith knew as early as 1952 that such a potential existed and for this reason he changed his legal residence from Alexandria to Broad Run. But Baker v. Carr was in the wind, and if Judge Smith is no longer in the House of Representatives it is as much a result of Supreme Court decisions as of a switch in voter sentiment. Thus, if Virginia has voted against Howard Smith, and only by 645 votes at that, it is hardly an affirmation of "liberalism." Court action suddenly put him at the mercy of newly enfranchised Negroes and newly arrived suburbanites. This has happened in different places, and for different reasons, and an excellent example is the redistricting of the suburban Minneapolis congressional seat of Dr. Walter Judd. The defeat of Dr. Judd was neither a philosophical nor a personal one. He was, after all, suddenly a Republican in a Democratic district, and the results showed that this was true. (2) Senator A. Willis Robertson was never a member of the Byrd Organization, so that his defeat can hardly be called a defeat for conservative Democratic politics in Virginia. It cannot be denied that Senator Robertson is a conservative, but it is likewise true that many Byrd Organization members supported Robertson's opponent, State Senator William Spong. The reasons for this are hard to discover, but may be found within the context of Senator Robertson's conduct of his own campaign. He made no real effort to answer the charges of his opponent with regard to financial support for his campaign from New York banking interests. As Chairman of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee such charges of conflict of interest were crucial. Yet despite all of this, Spong received only a little more than a 700 vote plurality.

The third major election in the Democrtic primary saw Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr., son of the long dominant figure in Virginia politics, defeat his liberal opponent, Armistead Boothe, by a comfortable margin.

Despite the fact that these results do not paint the picture of a great new consensus in Virginia, the nation's press and political commentators, long awaiting the demise of this stronghold of tradition and history, were quick to declare that a new era had indeed begun.

The *San Francisco Chronicle,* for example, stated that the election results were ". . . a good thing for the nation, not because Robertson and Smith are so old but because they are such intransigent opponents of the modern times in which we live."

The *Washington Post* admitted that "The vote in Congressman Howard Smith's Eighth district demonstrates that the most powerful force for congressional reform in this generation is the Supreme Court and its representative decisions." But the *Atlanta Constitution* said that Smith and Robertson were defeated not because of reapportionment but "because they represented the Old South" and "that South is changing for the better, and they were not."

Prior to the election, *The Reporter* noted that "If they (Robertson, Byrd and Smith) are beaten, this symbolic rejection of the old conservative leadership will serve as notice to the nation that Virginia is ready to secede from the Confederacy."

Commenting on the election, the *New York Times* admitted that ". . . the Byrd machine had" provided "40 years of highly disciplined, notably honest, and unusually competent government . . ." but while lamenting the loss of the "charm of tradition" to which it considered Virginia heir, the *Christian Science Monitor* hailed this movement of the state into what it termed "modernism."

One question heard frequently in Virginia is this: What is so meritorious about the modern world that Virginia should seek to join it?

The mass society of the 20th century has abandoned a concern with a man's background, his loyalties, his schooling, and roots from which he has come and to which he will, in some way, always return. We have become a rootless society, believing that success in the material sense is the only valid remaining standard, and what is right usually is what works. We have termed such expediency "pragmatism," and those who have the most guilt feelings about it are most determined to make us believe that it is a philosophy.

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This, however, is not unique in our own time. Victor Hugo, in the France of a different era, pointed out that "We live in a sad society. Succeed—that is the advice that falls, drop by drop, from the overhanging corruption."

It should have been evident as far back as the Civil War that no nation could truly be half rural and half industrial, half sentimental small town, and half urban metropolis. Lincoln believed that the dichotomy was between slave and free, and in a sense it was. The greater distinction, however, rested between those who viewed history as human experience to be studied and those who believed, with Henry Ford, that "history is bunk."

It was the distinction between those who were concerned with a man's character, and those who were concerned with his bankbook. It was the difference between *What Makes Sammy Run* and *Of Time and the River,* and in the depths of their being William Faulkner, and Robert Penn Warren, and Tennessee Williams, knew that they celebrated a past that was doomed.

Mass communication, nation-wide radio, television, and magazines, have tended to homogenize American culture and American values. In some respects this has been good, for it has broken down barriers of religious, racial, and ethnic antagonism.

In other respects, however, it has been bad. It has rejected the philosophy inherent in our national motto—"E Pluribus Unum"—and has decided, instead, to fashion a consensus. It is this concept which urges children to adjust to their environment, a questionable educational approach in an environment which has often come to extol the lowest common denominator, and not excellence.

It is not only the era of the "common man," but is becoming an era in which men of any other kind may not be permitted to exist. It is, if you please, "liberalism" with a vengeance, and now they say that Virginia has succumbed.

But Virginia has until now marched to a rather different drummer. It has, somehow, failed to believe that either man or society is perfectable, preferring to rely on man's history of indiscretion and vice. Modern technology has seemed to provide the answer to such problems for others, but Virginia felt that perhaps truth was to be found elsewhere.

Something of this view of "progress" was expressed by Whittaker Chambers, no Virginian, but in a very real sense the expositor of much that underlay its feeling:

> This perfectability is being achieved through technology, science, politics, social reform, education. Man is essentially good, says 20th century liberalism, because he is rational, and his rationality is divine, or at least benign. Thus the reason-defying paradoxes of Christian faith are happly by-passed. And yet, as 20th century civilization reaches a climax, its own paradoxes grow catastrophic. The incomparable technological achievement is more and more dedicated to the task of destruction. Man's marvelous conquest of space has made total war a house-hold experience, and, over vast reaches of the world, the commonest of childhood memories. The more abundance increases, the more resentment becomes the characteristic new look on 20th century faces. The faster science gains on disease, the more the human race dies at the hands of living men. Men have never been more educated, but wisdom, even as an idea, has conspicuously vanished from the world.

It is admittedly overstating the case to say that the unsuccessful primary performances of Howard Smith and Willis Robertson have ushered in the torrent of the 20th century's false gods to Virginia. But in a larger sense, Virginia is not simply that state which is bordered by Maryland, Kentucky, and Tennessee. It is our innocence, our pride, our belief in things unseen. It is moreover, our propriety, and our history, and as we have eliminated such forces from our lives, so we must eliminate their symbols.

For many years to come the streets of Williamsburg and Charlottesville and Christchurch will echo the voices of a past which exist only in memory. Virginia has been preserved in Williamsburg, and its 18th century flavor will be kept alive with the dollars which flow from the 20th century bankrolls, often donated by those in Bermuda shorts and sandals, those who could not understand the dreams of a Jefferson, but who still know that their freedom, or what is left of it, comes from those dreams.

John Randolph of Roanoke believed the patrician belief in an inequality of all things. "I believe in liberty," Randolph proclaimed, but "I hate equality." Today we are moving toward the opposite view. We love equality, and are indifferent to liberty if the two conflict.

But the 20th century will have its way, and such idle reminiscence is a pastime which will no longer be permitted even in Virginia. Yet in every society there must be a place where memories go, and where those things which are eternal will be preserved. Where, it is now proper to ask, will such a place be in America, now that Virginia threatens to join with this century of all truth.

Surprisingly, this question has not disturbed us very much, and this may be because today we may never look backward lest we see the men we were and lament for the kind of men we seem destined to be. That, it seems, is where Virginia has gone, and where all of us, in the end, must go.

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Haskell Hooked On The Northern Cheyenne

Gordon A. Weaver

March 3d

Fr. Cyprian Hogan, OFM
Cheyenne Mission School
Broadaxe, Montana

Dear Fr. Cyprian:

Enclosed please find my check for five dollars ($5.00) in response to your appeal.

My wife and I appreciated the gift of the model plastic teepee, and send our best wishes to you in your work among the northern Cheyenne. We're both sure the money will be put to good use, and only regret it is not more.

Yours Very Truly,

H. Haskell

March 19th

Fr. Cyprian Hogan, OFM
Cheyenne Mission School
Broadaxe, Montana

Dear Fr. Cyprian:

Enclosed find my check for $5.00 in response to your second appeal in as many weeks.

From the letter of thanks you sent after the first check I feel you've gotten off on an unfounded assumption. We're not fellow Catholics. It was the "Dear Friend in Christ" salutation in your letter—or does that just mean someone who appears to feel the same way about things like charity without belonging to the same club? My wife attended Bible camp for two summers while in junior high, so you could call us generic Protestants; anyway we're not Catholic. If we did attend a church regularly it would have to be one of the Lutheran varieties. Please don't misunderstand.

I like to call myself a liberal, and we both realize your mission helps the Cheyenne regardless of their religious affiliations—I remember your statement in the first appeal to the effect that only a small percentage of the tribe are practicing Catholics.

I only want the record straight. I give because I want to. Again, we send along our moral support. I know nothing about the problems you face, the daily lives of the Indians, but have some general ideas about poverty, bad nutrition, illiteracy, etc. prevailing on our federal reservations.

Yours Very Truly,

H. Haskell

P.S. You might like to know the little plastic teepee's in good hands. We have no children, but I gave it to a neighbor child, who was quite pleased. A miracle, her mother came over to thank me, and she's never done more before this than nod hello as she pulls out in her station wagon. I guess it's not the sort of toy one can buy in the stores here.

A former soldier, office clerk, dishwasher, foundry hand, garage attendant and student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, GORDON A. WEAVER now teaches English at Mariettta College in Ohio. His excellent story, *Low Blue Man,* appeared in *The North American Review,* Spring, 1965, issue.

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April 17th

Fr. Cyprian Hogan, OFM
Cheyenne Mission School
Broadaxe, Montana

Dear Father Cyprian:

What is it with you, Father? No, that's wrong. I don't want to offend, vent spleen, etc. But you're imposing, and I've got to express it. My wife warned me not to write—"Just simply ignore it," she said, "is there a law that says you have to answer all the junk mail you get?" But you owe me a hearing.

In two weeks' time we received two appeals from you for donations to your work among the northern Cheyenne. I sent you $10.00. The cancelled checks have already come back from my bank ("He didn't waste any time cashing in," my wife said when she was going over the monthly statement).

I hoped I conveyed good will, a recognition of your need, and I hoped—in vain I see now—you understand my position, that in good will you would not try to take advantage; now I get a third appeal for money. Let me be understood.

I am not wealthy. My salary is *exactly* $6,400 per annum (all right, so I get a little more each June when we work evenings on inventory). If you're interested (I doubt this), I make my living as a technical writer.

I write: technical manuals to accompany industrial air conditioning and heat transference units, explaining operation and maintenance for the layman; the text of advertising brochures used by our sales engineers; short articles on business conditions (marketing prospects for the near future) for a monthly trade magazine published by my employer.

Ye Gods, if I was rich wouldn't my checks have been larger? Wouldn't I beat the income tax with huge gifts, trust funds to see Indian orphans through graduate school? Wouldn't I sign over the deeds to properties to you, endow a chair in some university to study your problems? You abuse me.

Don't I give enough? My newsboy comes to the door in the evening to demand a contribution for summer camps for kids like himself—I give, not much, but give. College dropouts come around with magazine subscriptions to get trips to Europe. Brownies come in uniform to sell their cookies; I eat them for lunch faithfully. A neighbor (who holds loud parties we are never invited to) comes with a clipboard and informs me everyone is pledging twenty dollars for the ambulance service. I mail a buck to both political parties to keep democracy strong.

I'm not safe on the streets. Little Leaguers jump me on the way out of the bank with tin cans because they want an electric scoreboard. I get a Buddy Poppy each for wife and self. The Salvation Army surrounds me on the asphalt parking lot in the shopping center. At work, the United Fund sends me an IBM card via one of the girls in the steno pool. What is it with these people? I ask. "We've got to live here, don't we?" my wife says. I grin and give.

And now my name's on some religious sucker list. Because I've given you ten you think I'll give a hundred. I call halt. An unsolicited plastic teepee does not obligate me; I know the law. Catholics may be bound by oath or faith or mortal sin to support you. I am not.

How many of those printed formats do you have at the ready? Save it for someone else; I'm not a colored pin on a map, no target in your war to save the Red Man. I'm young, not thirty yet, owe on house and car, support a wife, heavily insured, need to hire a tree surgeon to save the one big elm on my property, suspect our furnace won't make another winter through. Give me a break.

Understand. "And then you go and write him another check," my wife says in disgust, and now pretends to be watching television too intently to hear me when I speak. "I don't want him to misunderstand is all," I say. So, $5 more, to convince you of good will, that I intend no hurt. Take it in the spirit it is given.

Sincerely,

H. Haskell

April 28th

Fr. Cyprian Hogan, OFM
Cheyenne Mission School
Broadaxe, Montana

Dear Fr. Cyprian,

I have received your long letter. You say: the force that carries you out there is the same spirit of charity you appeal to in me. Will it work to let you forgive me too?

What can I say? How kneel, sackcloth and ashes, beat the breast, how *mea culpa* from a thousand miles away via air mail? The whole thing reeks of ignorance and selfishness—all mine. Haskell thinks he understands, complains that your appeals are mass-produced, steals your time by demanding a personal reply.

I showed your letter to my wife. "I wish you'd just drop the whole thing," she said. "I should never have said those things. I didn't understand the way I do now," I said. No avail. "Just leave me out of it," she asks. Forgive her too.

When I started writing this she took the car and went over to my brother's house to visit with his wife. Have you heard anything from my brother? I gave him your address and one of the pamphlets. "What am I supposed to do with this?" he said. "Send him something." At least he folded it and put it in his pocket "You ever heard about charity at home?" he said. Then we took turns cutting his lawn with his new electric mower.

I plead ignorance in the first place. What did I know about the northern Cheyenne, Father? The story of Thomas, the little boy abandoned in the wrecked car by his parents because they couldn't feed

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him, that one did me in. Literally, real tears; fortunately I happened to be home alone then too. Sure I knew the Indians had it rough, but never the details. The TB, the drunkenness, infant mortality, what did I know? What I knew I only guessed. Thomas turning blue with cold in that rusted junker, asking how far down in the milk bottle he could drink, here I was ignorant. Can you forgive?

The same for the history pamphlets. I had ideas, broken treaties, destroying the buffalo herds, but that's all from the movies. My brother read the one about Shivington's massacre of the women and children in the village. "They had that on TV a while back, I think," he said. "This is where it happened," I said, "here, these people I'm telling you about." "I know it happened," he said, "When the program started it said it was based on an actual fact." What does he know?

I tried getting angry, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Secretary of the Interior (I don't even know his name), the President, affluent citizens of Montana. No good. It all came out shame in the end.

Then comes selfishness. Watch out here for self-pity.

Sometimes there's nothing to hold on to. I mean, wife, work, responsibilities, installment payments, become a little too much. I get afraid I can't hold it together for long, pieces are going to fall out, and where are we all then? Tangled up, I can't see out: it makes me selfish.

A few minutes ago (my wife still isn't back—she must be staying for the late show. Out the picture window, the last visible porchlight blinked off—no parties tonight)—a few minutes ago I promised myself not to talk about my problems. But to apologize I need to be understood.

Believe it, I work hard. If I'm a success, industrial air conditioners are sold, stock dividends are voted (I don't own much yet), but where am I? I go to sleep at night promising to be ready to eat the world the next day, but it's hard to concentrate with the township's teenagers peeling the corner at the end of the block. I must dream. The resolve to be enthusiastic is sapped when the clock radio buzzes — "I suppose it won't do to heat up last night's coffee for you, it's got to be fresh-made," my wife says. How would you feel?

Do priests get up before the sun to pray? Is that me, the swollen face shaving in the bathroom mirror? The glazed eyes mine? My wife sings with the sizzling bacon in the breakfast nook, I stand dumb looking at the sick elm in our yard. But I *do* get off to work. Do you understand me?

The days are longer now, still light when I come home, and I admit (why should I feel guilty?) to moments of peace after I greet my wife. We sit and watch the wars and speeches on film on the evening news, but who believes in that stuff? I drink a cold martini — okay, sometimes three — we talk about her day ("Did you see the moving van down towards the circle?" "Not when I came home, no. Who's moving out?" "I don't know their name, but there was a van there all day moving them out. It's the ones with the Imperial I told you about she's always driving by in." "So if you don't know their name who cares if they move?" "I didn't say I cared. I just told you.")

"Be a doll and mix one more," I say, "Two olives." All's well. I admit to moments of peace. Is it my fault they don't last?

I work in a cubicle in a large office (air conditioned). From my desk I can look out through glass panels at the busy secretaries in the steno pool, their ears plugged with dictaphones, eyes fixed on proof sheets. I never know their names until one comes around to collect donations for a wedding gift for Marie or Ardenne or Patty. I believe most of them are secret gum chewers. Engineers and marketing analysts and file clerks pass up and down aisles, say, "Here you go," when they toss a sheaf of paper into my *In* basket. Am I making sense?

I do try though. Excelsior. This Saturday I have decided to dig a small garden next to my garage. I was talking to the neighbor girl (she still has the teepee); she likes flowers, so I'll plant some along with a few vegetables. Back to the land.

Too tired to read it over, I hope what I've written is clear. The check, you'll see, is for ten this time, all I can do for now. Please continue to let me hear of your good work at the mission.

With sincere regard,

H. Haskell

May 29th

Fr. Cyprian Hogan, OFM
Cheyenne Mission School
Broadaxe, Montana

Dear Fr. Cyprian,

I thought I would not hear from you again. Good to know I am not forgotten. Is the little Indian chief doll authentic? I mean, are headdress, decorations on the jacket, etc. the kind the Cheyenne wear — wore once? We've put him on the mantlepiece above the fireplace. My wife thinks he's cute. She calls him Sitting Bull, though I tell her he wasn't a Cheyenne. Or was he?

Not cute though. I've been analyzing the expression on his face. At first I said: Stoic. But that's all in the folded arms. Then: Courageous. But the blue painted eyes are too pale, no steel there. Sad? His back's too stiff. Finally I knew. "He disapproves," I said to my wife. "Who what?" "Sitting Bull. Over the fireplace." "What about him?" "He condemns." "What are you talking about, Haskell? Did I make the martootie too strong?" (She never uses my first name; nor do I — have you noticed? Hollis: my mother's maiden name — my brother got Jack, because he's the older.)

Unless I can learn to stare him (Sitting Bull) down I'm going to give him away too. "I tell you he doesn't like it," I said to my wife, "All that Indian wisdom in him disapproves." She said, "I think you're getting hooked on the northern Cheyenne, Haskell." Pure fantasy, Father, I assure you.

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I wish this check could be more, but insurance all comes due at the same time: automobile, theft, fire, property, hospitalization, life.

Are there any extra pamphlets (describing the work) lying around in your office? I want to give some to friends and people at work.

Hoping to hear from you soon again,

H. Haskell

P.S. My garden progresses. Besides flowers, I planted sweet corn, tomatoes, lettuce, beans — a landmark in this neighborhood. The little girl next door has never seen a tomato growing on a vine before in her life. "My daughter tells me you're planting regular vegetables and stuff here," her father said to me. He had come out in his slippers. "'I'm Haskell," says I, hand extended. "I know who you are, I can read the writing on the mail box like anybody else, can't I? What do you want to do a thing like that for, can you tell me that?" "I like fresh corn." "'You know this is gonna make my house look like hell too, don't you?" I promised to try and keep it small. "What did you expect him to say?" my wife said. Who could tell? What a world we live in, Father.

P.P.S. Next stop: public library — subject: American Indians.

June 16th

Dear Fr. Cyprian,

Pardon poor penmanship. I should be working, but who are we trying to kid? The wooden trays on my desk runneth over — copy piles up awaiting my initials (HHH — my mother's mother's maiden name was Hart). Through the glass wall around me I can see the steno I'm keeping idle. She is at a loss, buffs her nails, cleans her teeth with her tongue, changes typewriter ribbons, stacks carbons in readiness, switches off to the ladies' room, returns too soon, panics, looks to me with terrified eyes, and I shake my head, pontifical as Sitting Bull on my mantle, and she slumps into her chair defeated. The trouble is I get to thinking.

In the cafeteria a salesman said to me, "What's the use of working when the government takes a fifth of what I make before I even see it?" I swallowed my bread. "Do you know the Indians out in Montana make less a year, on the average, than you probably pay in taxes in a year?" He threw down his sandwich before he blasted me. "Oh for the Christ's sakes (he said it, Father, not me) Haskell, will you get off the goddamned boring damned Indians in Montana!" Dessert, two cupcakes under cellophane, passed in silence. What's the use?

I gave up reading the library books. "Are we doing anything tonight?" my wife asked. "Doing? I'm doing, I'm reading, right?" "If you're sticking your nose in a book all night, sure," and she turned on the television extra loud to get even. "Do you know all about Indians now?" the librarian asked when I returned them. What do I know?

Last Saturday I was weeding and cultivating my sweet corn. Pleasant, hot sun, hands sore and back stiff, but my neighbor was watching me from his garage, pretending to putter with his son's go-kart. At last I waved and he came over. "Great day for outdoor work," says I. "Can I ask you something in a nice way? Can I ask you something simple like one gentleman to another?" Shoot. "Will you get rid of this corn patch? Flowers I have nothing against, but you'll agree I got twenty-four thousand dollars invested in a home, I've got a right to protect it." "I'll share the sweet corn with you. Would you and your wife come to a corn roast? I'm thinking of building a barbecue, would you like to help?" He affirms that he has tried to reason with me, now warns he will go about it in a different manner since I only want trouble. Do I need trouble, Father Hogan?

I quit the garden because I'd rather mix cement. How is the work going on the dormitory? I looked around at my corn, the small green tomatoes, climbing beans, remembered the Indian children afraid to eat your school's hot lunch because they never have lunch at home, afraid to eat today because tomorrow they'll be hungry again. I checked out a book on bricklaying yesterday. My wife doesn't understand at all.

My supervisor approaches, the steno at his side. He is grim, puzzled. She wrings her hands. Must close.

In haste,

Haskell

July 27th

Fr. Cyprian Hogan, OFM
Cheyenne Mission School
Broadaxe, Montana

Dear Fr. Cyprian,

Telephoned home this afternoon. "Any mail?" I asked my wife. "Where are you calling from?" "Work, where else?" "I thought you weren't supposed to make personal calls." "What mail?" "There's one." "Are you trying to make me angry? One from where?" "Postmarked Montana." "Bring it down, I'll meet you in the parking lot." "I've got better things to do with my time." Name one, I said, but she wouldn't, so I had to wait to get home this evening to write you.

I am honestly excited about the possibilities of the new industry as a means of helping the Cheyenne. My professional opinion of the full-color brochure layouts on the jewelry you're making is no less than good. Good. If you want I'll show them to the art boys at work and pass their judgment along. How are the orders coming in?

After sound and fury, my wife agrees to telephone all her friends and drum up a big sale for you. "How?" she says. "Have a party, I'll get out of the house, the way they do for pots and pans." Tomorrow she promises to start.

At first I pondered: Indian jewelry? But *what* doesn't matter, I see now. Why is all. You start with

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fifteen employed — how soon can you expand? You make mail order jewelry to remake men; I sell air conditioners. The check's only ten again, but I'll nag my wife to come up with an order for the beads that will more than make up for it.

I appreciated the personal note. Was my letter "diffuse?" It was one of those days. That set my wife off again. Am I writing letters on the sly now? I write because I need to write, I feel like writing. Am I going into the charity business? I give because I want to give. Why don't I take a walk through the slums here if I want to give? She just doesn't understand, does she. All's well now though; I agreed to go visit my brother and his wife with her.

One failure: I tried to ship you some corn and beans I harvested this week (I knew tomatoes would never make it). "Can't take it," said the little man in the blue coat at the post office. "It'd spoil." I might have said: what good's a post office that can't ship food from one man to another? People are starving out there! But he looked tired, and his blue jacket was wrinkled. Will two wrongs make a right?

Your friend,

H. Haskell

P.S. Are summers in Montana such you could use an air conditioner in the school or the new dormitory when it's done? I might be able to start something at the office to get them to contribute one. Isn't it deductible?

August 14th

Dear Father,

No letterhead stationery this time. I'm not at work, but that's all arranged. I couldn't do what I was supposed to. The steno did her best, didn't sic the supervisor on me for some time. "Mr. Haskell," she said, "if you don't give me that stuff then I've got nothing to do and Miss Lubin will be after me for sitting around." No small thing, Miss Lubin is huge and acne-scarred. What could I do. "Maybe later," says I. "Not now." She had to bring my supervisor. His name is Knauer, all my copy has to go through him.

"What is it you think you're doing, Haskell?" "I told him I hadda have that stuff or Miss Lubin gets after me, Mr. Knauer," the steno said. I think she was beginning to enjoy it. "I'll do this," Knauer said. The typewriters slowed down on the other side of the glass; there hadn't been any excitement in the office since personnel hired a mousey girl named Peplinski (her name I knew!) months ago — she was a secret epileptic and threw a fit at her desk, chewed right through some bond paper one afternoon. "I can't do anything," I said.

"Are you ill, Haskell? Are you trying to pull something off on me?" "The Indians need me, Knauer," and I might have gotten snotty with him, but remembered that everyone calls him Weasel Knauer behind his back because of his narrow pointed face, so took pity and kept silence. "He's been talking funny about those Indians," he whispered to the steno, and they backed out afraid. He came back with a janitor to protect him in case I raged. "You can feel free to go home if something's wrong, Haskell," he said. The janitor carried a long-handled broom to subdue me. Am I the violent type? "Just till you feel better. Don't

THE WINGED CHARIOT

please ask the cookies to stop selling us girl scouts
laughed the fragile lilac ladies with charity hearts
to the delicate tea-green ladies in their cups
while mute-mouthed madam chairman queen of tarts
winked at her minion led with a ruby trump
turned off her hearing aid and ate the cards

how mean of Mrs. Death they cried to miss the bus
she runs so hard her breasts fly everywhere
she can afford it said the pink-eyed blond
while the little dog sniffed all the ladies' rumps
she can sit on the curb and rot for all I care
and whimpered piteously for air

throwing her whalebone shadow on the floor
the maple matriarch of purple glen
held it down with one foot while she dealt
diamonds from between her first and second chins
taking the following trick with following eyes
said such busdrivers are wicked men

we must speak to someone about it she isn't well
said maple matriarch eyeing the dog
when she asked for a transfer once he told her to go to hell
where's that said madam chairman screwing her ears back on
probably some new section on the south side
poor soul what a long and tiring ride
especially the way that maniac drives
we shall probably all be gone when she arrives

Richard Shelton

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worry about a thing," he said, "I'll contact personnel for you."

"I'm worried about the Indians, Weasel Knauer," I said, but he kept on backing out to make sure the janitor was between us until I left the office. The girls in the steno pool tried not to stare.

My wife won't know about this letter either because she hasn't been here for three days. It could be she calls, or it could be personnel wanting to know if I'm terminating, but I don't answer the phone. I came home like they told me at the office, and I could talk to her, but she didn't quite understand.

"I'm telling you why if you'll listen to me. It was the Indians. I couldn't do what I'm supposed to do there," I said. Said she: "I don't know what's the matter with you, you talk about the Indians all the time. You never say anything except about the Indians all the time. Stay over there. Don't touch me. I don't understand you any more. I don't want to talk about the Indians any more." What was there left to say? But I kept on talking, and finally she cried, and she cried, so I stopped for good, so she left. I think she's with my brother and his wife. Her parents live far from here. The phone rings often, and there was someone at the door yesterday and today. I thought I recognized the broken muffler on my brother's Oldsmobile.

Why don't you write? Are you still waiting for that jewelry order I promised? Give up, Father. Nobody wants Indian-style jewelry, not my wife, not anybody. She broke her promise about holding that party to sell it. "I'd be ashamed to show cheap jewelry like that to my friends." I tried to tell her how it was to help the Cheyenne, but who understands? I think they have all the jewelry they need.

I've thought better of it too, Father. Sending out plastic teepees and Indian dolls, cheap jewelry, that's not the way, not for me anyhow. I gave Sitting Bull to the neighbor girl, but her mother brought it back. "Keep your trashy presents to yourself!" she screamed when I opened the door. I was afraid she'd have an attack of some kind. When her husband came home that night he stood in his yard and glared at my cornfield with his hands on his hips. My tomatoes are rotting on the vines. I started with a bushel basket full at the other end of the block to give them away, but when the woman (maybe it was a maid?) peeked through her curtains to see who it was she waved me off. The word must be out on Haskell.

No, the way is things like the mission school, and the free hot lunches for children who don't get them at home, and finding Thomas abandoned in the auto wreck. That's the way. Build that dormitory and staff the school with teachers so you can have classes more than half a day. What kind of a world is this?

The doorbell's ringing. Maybe you've written, but I haven't gone out to see the mail. There won't be any money in this letter because my wife took the checkbook with her. I might as well answer the door, I've got to go out to mail this (if I can find a stamp). Money's not the way anyhow.

Sept. 5th

Dear Father,

Here's proof I no longer ignore the mail, though now all my letters are delayed a day or two because of my change of address. I've been with my brother and his family for the past few days. My wife is now with her parents, and while I'm grateful to my brother for taking me in, I will be glad to leave (he is glad our mother didn't live to see this, etc.) My sister-in-law won't stay alone in the same room with me, and their children are with her parents until I go. Can I blame them? Accept, I say to myself, they don't want to understand.

From your letter, Father Hogan, I'd almost think you didn't understand either. I'm satisfied to think that's just a problem caused by my "'diffuse" expression. I comment briefly; there's much to do before I can be on my way.

Agreed, the world's as it is because we're like we are. Now concede we can change it by changing ourselves. Proof? Look in the mirror. I'm argument enough for me.

Friends, clergyman, psychiatrists? Come on now! Do I need friends with a brother like mine? I went to church last Sunday — my brother's high Episcopal these days — it's the closest one. "Excuse me, Reverend," I said (my brother says he's called Father, like you). "Would you read this little prayer and appeal for the northern Cheyenne at the end of your sermon for me today? I've got my telephone number right there if anyone wants to call in a pledge." I still have the mark on my arm where my brother grabbed me when he pulled me away to a pew. "Can't I even let you out of the house?" he said. You're the only clergy I know, and I've been consulting, not your letters, but your example. I don't see doctors because I don't have money (that's all my wife's, house, car, our small savings) — what do I need money for? I know the language of psychiatrists. They don't want to change the world.

Here I am then. We can talk all this over in detail later if you want. I wish I could say exactly when, but there are papers to be signed, arrangements — I hope for the best. Who knows, with luck I might arrive at the mission shortly after this letter.

You'll see, I'll be of use. I'll mix cement, lay bricks, teach school. I'll scour the mountains for abandoned children. I can learn. I haven't told you before this because I feared you wouldn't understand. But you'll see. It may take longer than I think. I have so little money I may have to hitchhike all the way to Montana. What does time matter when you've found your way at last, Father?

My brother shouts from downstairs that dinner is ready. The flesh must be fed. I'll close:

H. Haskell, Your Friend in Christ.

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Independence Day

Norma Klein

"A lot of supplies you got there," the man behind the counter at the grocery said, looking at her intently as he fitted the last package into the second of two large bags.

Anne flushed. "Yes, it is . . . a lot," she said. She bent to pick up the package, one in each arm, but the man darted out in front of her. "I'll carry them out for you," he said. "Your car out in front?"

She nodded and together they went out the swinging door.

The parking lot of the grocery was decorated with red, white and blue banners for the Fourth of July. An American flag was even hanging from the center of the small wooden grocery, concealing a large poster which read in emphatic black letters: "Pork chops, sixty-nine cents a pound." Anne opened the car door and the man deftly hoisted the two packages onto the back seat. "Thank you," she said, smiling at him. She was a small, delicately built girl in her early twenties with dark hair pulled back into a long ponytail. The severity of the hairdo made her eyes tilt up at the corners, giving her face a piquant, Oriental look.

"Say, listen," the man said, straightening up and staring directly at her. "I've got my lunch break now. If you want, I'll drive you home, wherever you're going. What do you say?"

The expression in her eyes changed instantly. She touched her lips with a quick, nervous gesture. "Oh, that's awfully nice of you," she said, "but I'd better—I'll go by myself." Opening the door, she slid in behind the wheel.

But the man persisted. Resting his elbow on the slightly opened window, he asked, "You live around here? In one of these summer houses?"

"No, I—a friend of mine has a house near here," she replied, now acutely uncomfortable. She took a pair of dark glasses out of her purse and put these on, as though for protection.

"I've seen you coming into town," he said grinning. "You come in every week or so, right? You have some kind of a pretty red dress you wear usually."

"Yes, I do . . . have a red dress," Anne said. She smiled stiffly and mumbling, "I really must go," pressed on the gas pedal. The car careened off, nearly crashing into the front gate of the parking lot on the way out.

A little ways out of town, she stopped the car by the side of the road. She tried to remember if there was anything else she had meant to buy. For ten minutes she sat staring out over the steering wheel in a kind of daze. She had bought so many groceries—over twenty dollars worth—because that morning, waking up, she had decided she would leave Ben. Was that why she had felt so flustered and guilty about the proposition from the man in the grocery, as though it proved that even he, a stranger, sensed that she was now available, for a flirtation or anything else? The buying of the groceries was part of her plan. I'll buy enough to last him at least two weeks, she had told herself, as she had lain awake beside his slumbering body at five in the morning, staring at the wooden-beamed ceiling. Even then she had known, in the back of her mind, that the supplies were irrelevant, but her purpose was to make some sort of friendly, final gesture, not simply to leave him cold. The physical details of getting away without his noticing would not be difficult. He was often out of the house or away somewhere. She could just get into the car and drive to the train station. It was his car, but she would leave him a note, telling him where he could find it. He won't mind the twenty minute walk to the railway station, she thought. He likes walking.

Anne had met Ben six months earlier in Florida. It was the middle of winter then and she had been sent by her parents for a month's vacation to "relax, have a good time," their euphemisms for wanting her to recover, once and for all, from the death of her husband a year earlier. Ben, it turned out, had been sent by *his* relatives to recover from an attack of t.b. which had kept him hospitalized in a sanitorium for the past two years. Previous to this, he had been a physicist at the Radiation Lab in Berkeley, but the illness had interrupted his career and he was only gradually, with painful slowness, catching up on all he had missed in his absence. She had not known of his illness when she first noticed him. What had attracted her to him was the expression in his eyes, a combination of bitterness and detachment that perfectly mirrored her own inner state. In looks he had reminded her of the Swedish actor who had played Christ in one of the post Cecil B. DeMille biblical spectaculars. He had the same mild, dreamy-looking blue eyes, a bony face with high cheekbones, sharply defined, and a mouth set with a harshness that suggested to her endurance in the face of pain. Yet his smile was sly, almost michievous, and was combined with a peculiar, mordant sense of humor. Once, when they were sitting on the hotel veranda toward evening, drinking a pineacolada, a

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A New Yorker, NORMA KLEIN'S stories have appeared in *Mademoiselle, MSS, O. Henry Prize Stories of 1963, New Campus Writing,* and many other magazines.

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specialty of the small hotel at which they both were staying, he had said, "It's so quiet you could almost hear someone slitting their wrists." Another time, when the waitress in the hotel dining room asked him if he wanted his eggs fried or scrambled, he had laughed and said, "I thought you said, 'Do you want them fried or strangled?' " For a month they had lain side by side on the beach, often not speaking, but sharing a sense of removal from the frolicking couples on the sand who leaped into the waves, laughing, and played catch along the shore. These silences had been restful to Anne, rusty as she was from a year's lack of contact with people, especially men. With him she felt she did not have to make any explanations about the past or her mood.

When they parted at the end of the month, they had both been hesitant about making plans for the future. Ben mentioned casually that he sometimes came to Washington, where she worked, on a consulting job with a government laboratory; he promised to look her up when he did. She was not sure that she would ever hear from him again. Three weeks later he called, saying he would arrive that Thursday. Seeing him at the airport, for the first time since Florida, in a dark business suit, carrying an attache case, her first thought was: I hardly know him. Who is he? But after that evening there had returned the same sense of ease she had felt with him in Florida, as though she had known him for years and years and there was no need to explain anything. He began coming to Washington more often, once every few weeks, and each time they would spend the weekend together. Often she cooked dinner for him in her small, one-room apartment and later he would make love to her on the studio couch in the corner of the room.

One evening, as they were having coffee in the kitchen, he had begun talking about his grandfather's house in Montana. His grandparents were dead and his parents divorced so that, he said, he was now the only one who used the house at all. He described how before his illness he had often gone there for summers, living alone, baking his own bread, photographing wild flowers, and reading long Russian novels in the evening. This ability to live alone and be contented with it appealed to Anne as showing a strength and independence she knew she lacked. Although she, too, had been alone in the past year, partly by choice, she thought of it as a grey, desolate time which she hoped would not be repeated. "It would be nice if you could see the house sometime," he said. "My grandfather built it himself, log by log. He was an amazing man." "Yes, I'd like to," she had said. "I've never been out West." The next time he came to Washington, they made tentative plans for her to visit him for a month over the summer. Finally, in early June, she had flown out by jet and he had met her at the airport in Butte.

* * *

A car behind her on the road honked. Startled, Anne pulled ahead and then continued on, letting the car pass her on the left. She drove slowly and carefully around the bending, dusty road. It was a peculiar landscape, one to which, as an Easterner, she was not accustomed. Her idea of country until now had been the rolling hills of Massachusetts and Connecticut where she had gone to summer camp as a girl. Here everything was more severe. The mountains seemed huge and, although most of them had thick forests of pine trees at their bases, they grew bare as they rose upward. There had been many forest fires in recent years and what trees remained were charred and black. From a distance the mountains reminded her of huge pin cushions with the blackened trees sticking up at awkward angles, like pins. Far below the road, hundreds of feet down, they were clearing the land to build a giant dam. Derricks, bug-like from her vantage point, crawled slowly back and forth, shifting fallen trees, biting into the dry, eroded earth. The sky, as always, seemed tremendous, cloudless, almost unfriendly, it was so bare and blue.

The house itself was set in a clearing up in the mountains. Parking the car around in back, Anne walked slowly to the porch. Suddenly, simply from leaving the car in which she had felt momentarily mobile and independent, the sense of dread and despair she had felt while planning her escape that morning came back to her. "Ben?" she called softly. "Ben?"

He was, as she had suspected, chopping wood. In fact, since the weather was cool only in the evenings, they had not much need of wood, yet almost every day he went out to chop. By now the stack of logs beside the house was enormous. He would go out and chop for hours, his whole body seeming intent on smashing the logs into small, useable pieces. Later he would come into the house, his body soaked with sweat, exhausted, and sleep the rest of the afternoon. Now, seeking her, he looked up. "How're things in town?" he said.

"Okay." Because of her deception as to the purpose of her shopping, she felt awkward with him. "They have a lot of Fourth of July things out."

He smiled. "Yes, I'd forgotten that. Is it the Fourth already? There'll be firecrackers tonight."

"Where?" she said. She had liked firecrackers as a girl.

"Oh, from another town a little ways back. You can see them up here usually."

"That'll be nice." Her words, even to herself, sounded flat. He stared at her a moment and then looked away.

"Could you help me with the groceries?" she said abruptly. "They're in the car." This seemed a pitiful excuse to engage his aid, but she did not care.

"Oh, sure." He went around to the back with her and scooped the two heavy bags up, one in each arm.

"I can carry one," she said.

"No, that's okay . . . You got quite a lot, didn't you?"

She ducked her head, not looking at him. "Yes, I—yes."

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She watched him as he walked ahead of her with the packages. With this month in the country he had become physically quite healthy-looking. He was the kind of man who would never be heavy or even stocky, but he was no longer as starkly thin and anemic-looking as he had been in Florida. Probably the wood-chopping had built up his strength. He was tan, too, freckled because of his light skin, but with so many freckles they seemed to belend together. His eyes, which were always a bright blue, looked more intense now that his eyebrows and hair had been lightened by the sun. But in her present mood this superficial healthiness seemed false to Anne, a kind of disguise, like a woman painting her face into a pretty mask.

"I'll get lunch," she said when they were in the kitchen, wanting suddenly to give him one more chance, to see if they could work it out.

He shook his head. "No, don't bother," he said. "I thought I might take a walk now. I don't feel hungry."

"Oh, all right . . . Are you going right now?"

"I might as well." He smiled at her in a peculiar, strained way. "I'll see you later," he said.

Anne watched him walk off, the ax under his arm, out across the meadow in front of the house and then into the denser part where the trees were thick. When he rebuffed her as he had just now, as he had so many times in the past month, she felt a dead, cold feeling in the pit of her stomach, as though she had been dealt a physical blow. Well, why did you ask me to come then? she cried silently to his gradually retreating figure. What was the point in it? True, in Florida and in Washington, he had not been a totally different person. He had been reserved; she had sensed it was hard for him to communicate with people, especially women. But at least he had seemed to be trying, whereas in the month they had been living together, he had been so cold, so locked off. Did he feel he had made the invitation impulsively and now regretted it? Perhaps he preferred it as it had been before, when he had lived by himself. Well, damn it, let him do that then. Why should she be slowly torn to pieces this way? The feeling of hurt changed to anger and she was actually glad when he finally disappeared around the bend.

Once he was gone, the house seemed very quiet again. Idly, not knowing what to do with herself, Anne wandered to the front of the house. She spread a towel out on the grass and, taking off her clothes, fell asleep in the comforting warmth of the sun.

* * *

When she woke up, the sun had gone in. Anne was not sure how long she had been asleep. Looking at her watch, she saw it was past four. Already the air was growing cooler. Inside the house she showered and, remembering what the man at the grocery had said, put on her red dress. For the Fourth of July she impulsively tied a blue and white striped scarf around her waist. Her body had been burned slightly from the sun, but not unpleasantly since she had a tan already. Humming, she went into the kitchen to prepare dinner. The last supper, she thought grimly.

The cooking absorbed her and put most other thoughts out of her mind, but by early evening, she began to worry. Where was he? Why wasn't he back? She went inside, washed her face with cold water, came back and made herself a stiff drink. It was almost dark by now. Sitting by the window, sipping her drink, she looked off toward the path Ben had taken earlier.

The opening of the door startled her. Although she had been looking out the window, she had been in a daze and not seen or heard Ben approach. She stared at him as though he were a ghost. His shirt, almost the only one he had, the one she had washed every week, was ripped off at the arm; the cloth had been tied clumsily around his foot. As he came into the kitchen, she saw he was walking unevenly, hardly stepping on one foot. The foot was soaked in blood.

"Jesus Christ," she said angrily, frightened at the sight of the blood. "What happened to you?"

Ben laughed. "It's absurd," he said. "I was off chopping wood down by that clearing and I missed and hit my foot."

For some reason she was furious at him. "How could you *do* a thing like that?" she said. "How could you not see your own foot?"

He shrugged and sat down on one of the kitchen chairs. "It's like when you were cutting celery the other day—remember how you cut your finger?"

"Yes, but a fiinger isn't a foot." She was so upset her whole body was trembling. She stared at him, her mouth twisted. "What did you—cut your whole foot off?" she said ironically.

"No, no, really, it's not serious, I swear. I didn't touch the bone . . . I think I should wash it, though." He seemed totally unconcerned or rather, more than that, he was in a downright good mood. He looked exultant, his hair disheveled, his eyes bright. She would have thought he had been drinking if she had not known him better. "Don't be angry with me, Annie," he said suddenly with his sly, impish smile.

She shook her head. "I'm *not* angry," she said curtly, turning away from him.

"Will you help me wash it?"

"Of course." Anne filled a bowl with warm water and, kneeling in front of him, washed his foot. He was right; it wasn't a serious wound. But the skin had been torn deeply and the blood was still flowing. When it was clean, she wrapped it up tightly with some gauze, trying to keep a steady head since the sight of all the blood had made her queasy.

As she was tying the final knot, Ben said, "It was so incredibly beautiful out there." He looked down at her, his hands on his knees. Usually he talked hesitantly, in a low voice, but now his voice was trembling with excitement. "It's the absolute quiet that strikes you, I think. It's as though everything were under a magic spell . . . These two deer came down to drink at the river and passed right in front of me. As close as you are now. I could have touched them. I

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could see everything, their faces, their eyes—" He stopped abruptly and put out his hand to touch her hair. "Your hair feels soft," he said in a steadier voice.

"Yes, I washed it," Anne said, not looking at him. She was done with the bandage and sat back on her heels, wrapping up the excess gauze.

He leaned back in the chair, watching her, a meditative expression on his face. "I feel in a curious mood," he said. "I can't explain it."

"Yes, I can tell," Anne said. In a stern voice she added, "I don't see why, after cutting yourself half to pieces."

"But there's what I think it is," he said, leaning forward, his voice gaining the same excitement and intensity again. "I was thinking of this as I came back here. It's that for so long now—God, I can't even tell you how long, forever, it seems—ever since I got out of the sanitorium, or even earlier, ever since I started to get well, I've had this feeling of dread, of something hanging over me. And suddenly this afternoon it seemed to disappear. Just vanished, like a cloud." He was silent a moment. "This is what happens. I've tried to analyze it. You get ill, ill in the sense of a year, a couple of years, your whole life is torn apart, your plans, everything! At first you're angry—why did this happen to you instead of him or him? But then, it's strange, you begin accepting it. You begin giving up on life or, maybe you think of it—life is giving up on you. It amounts to the same thing. Then, just as you've accepted this, you've learned to live with it, along comes the bevy of doctors and specialists and whatever the hell else, gathering around you, trying to help you etcetera etcetera. Then, lo and behold, you're well. They let you out. You're 'on the road to recovery' as they say. Well, what do you do then?" He smiled but his mouth was set in a severe, ironical line. "Someone hands you back life and what do you do with it? Mount it on a page like a butterfly? Put it in a cage and watch it prowl back and forth? You don't know what to do. But you feel somehow you have to do something to justify it." His eyes, very bright and blue, were fixed on her with such passionate intensity she could not look away.

"In what way?" she caid carefully, getting up from the floor. "In what way do you have to justify yourself?"

"In everything!" The words seemed to explode out of him. "In your career where you've fallen behind, with people. It's a sense of pressure, as though the whole world is crowding around you, demanding some response you can't give, some, oh I don't know . . . I don't know what I've been talking about." Suddenly his tone changed completely. His face turned hostile and cold, as though he regretted having spoken so freely.

"Do you think *I've* been pressuring you?" Anne said, her back to him as she set the basin of water down on the sink.

He hesitated for a moment. "Yes," he said finally. "Yes, you have . . . watching me, following me around, 'observing' me."

"If you were more open, I wouldn't have to do that."

"Why don't you let *me* decide that?"

Suddenly her own anger, which had been simmering beneath the surface for so long, burst out. "Because if I waited for you to decide, I'd wait forever, that's why," she said, whirling around to face him. "When would you ever show me, tell me anything? You just want to be locked in yourself, like someone in a box!"

"How about you?" he said evenly. His cold, measured voice frightened her. Even his eyes seemed like ingots, burning at her accusingly.

"What do you mean, how about me?"

"You've been doing the same thing. You remember that evening in Washington when we talked about coming here. That was the last time you talked to me freely, openly. Since we've been up here together, you've been like a clam."

Anne looked down. Nervously she began twirling a strand of hair around her finger. "I didn't want to intrude on you," she said softly.

"That's nonsense, Anne. That's not the reason."

"What *is* the reason, then?" She looked at him, her face hot.

"You lock yourself in too. Don't pretend you haven't, that it's been all me. That's only the picture you'd like to paint."

Anne felt helpless, her anger dissolved like foam. Her only desire was somehow to hold back tears, to keep from breaking down in front of him. "What did you want me to do?" she said in a choked voice. *"You* invited me here . . . I can't go off in the woods and hack myself to pieces just for revenge on the world."

This time it was Ben who flushed. "Don't be a bitch, Anne," he said curtly.

"I'm not." Then, in a very low voice, head bowed, she added, "I don't mean to be, anyway."

He was silent. "No, I'm sorry," he said a moment later. He stood up and touched her shoulder. "I didn't mean that . . . But I did mean about the other."

She stood stiffly, not moving but acutely aware of his hand on her shoulder. "About my trying to figure you out?"

"No, not that, that's not important, but this way you've closed yourself off from me. Like this afternoon. You could have asked me where I was going. But you never do. You're always sitting there, waiting for me to make the first move, accusing me silently if I don't. I can almost see you doing it. But you keep yourself and your thoughts and feelings a complete mystery."

She looked up into his face and laughed incredulously. "Me? A mystery?"

"Yes," he said, smiling at her ironically. "Like the dance of the seven veils. Except that you still have all seven veils on."

"All seven?"

"Well, maybe six and a half, then." He hesitated a moment, then said, "No, I mean it. For instance, your marriage—"

"Yes, I—" But at these words Anne moved away from him, almost instinctively.

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"You've never told me anything about it," Ben said, facing her back which was all that was turned to him. "I know nothing about your husband except that he taught history somewhere."

"You never asked me." This was barely audible, her voice was so low.

He mimicked her, but gently. "I didn't want to intrude on you . . . You try so hard to conceal things," he went on, "but part of you reveals them anyway. Your eyes, for instance . . . I know from your eyes that your husband's death did something to you, crippled you in some way, not from anything you've said."

"My eyes?" At this she turned halfway around. Her glance flickered up and met his, timorously.

"A dead look they get, closed in on themselves, frightened, like a mouse hiding in a hole."

Anne flushed. "I thought I had such a poker face."

He laughed.

"I *did*—really!"

"You must lose a lot of money at poker."

Anne straightened up, forcing herself to look directly at him. "You're right," she said, staring straight ahead, holding herself stiffly, "It's been me, my fault all along. I just wasn't facing it."

"Don't be silly! Do you think I'm particularly easy to live with?"

"But it was my fault *more*. I—"

He laughed, an open, easy laugh. "Come on now! No masochistic snobbishness! It's my fault more than yours. I suffer more than you. That's not allowed."

At this Anne had to smile. "No, you're right."

"Stop backing down on everything. I'm not *always* right."

She looked at him indignantly. "I should say not! Going off and hacking your damn foot off."

"I didn't hack it off. You keep exaggerating . . . Maybe you'd have liked me to hack it off. Then I'd be a real cripple and you'd really have someone to take care of."

"That is a lot of Freudian baloney."

Ben began mock-limping around the kitchen, holding out his hand, as though begging. "Please, an offering for a poor—"

"Now, cut it out," Anne said, trying to keep from laughing. "We have to have dinner, for one thing. Aren't you hungry?"

"Starved."

"So, what do you want?"

"How about some of that Freudian baloney and eggs?"

"If you're not serious, you won't get anything."

Ben shook his head. "Annie, you're so terribly stern. You're terrifying me."

"We're having spaghetti and clam sauce—and I don't want to hear a word out of you until I've finished cooking."

The dinner was good. With the spaghetti they drank some red wine which Ben had bought in town two weeks earlier in a huge gallon jug. Anne felt herself getting mildly drunk. The wine and the sunburn which she was just beginning to feel, made her whole body feel on fire. Toward the end of the meal she got up from the table and went to stand near the open window to feel the cool air on her face. "Look," she said, pointing. "The've started the firecrackers."

Ben came over and stood next to her. "That's nothing yet. Usually they have better ones."

The firecrackers began going off more frequently. One after the other shooting into the air, creating patterns that were instantly dispersed and then formed again, blue, yellow, lavender. "I like it here," Anne said. "I like the silence."

For a minute Ben didn't answer. Then he said slowly, "Yes, I knew you would. That's why I wanted you to come . . . You know, I've never had anyone else up here." He put his hand on her hair and began stroking it. "I don't altogether mind your trying to figure me out," he said. "In a remote way I suppose I was glad that you seemed to think it worth the effort." He turned her around so that he could reach her mouth. They kissed deeply, and when they broke apart, Ben said, "Why don't we go inside?"

Anne followed him into the bedroom. The bed was his grandfather's, a large bed, so large, in fact, that though they had lain side by side for a month now, often their bodies had never touched. Frequently Ben had woken up in the middle of the night and gone inside to read in front of the fireplace. He would stay away half an hour, an hour, two hours, and Anne would lie stiffly in bed, staring at the ceiling, wanting to go in, but afraid of disturbing him. When he returned, she had always lain perfectly still, her eyes shut, pretending to sleep. She had hoped that, despite this, he might reach out, to touch or caress her, but he never had. Now, as she lay naked in his arms, her body felt charged not only with the pent-up desire of the past month, but with the strange heat from the sun and the wine. Putting her hand over her head to touch his, she found it was trembling, as it had when he had made love to her for the first time.

Afterward she lay next to him, listening to the sound of the firecrackers off in the distance. "I thought of leaving you today," she said, turning her lips so they were against his face.

"I know," said Ben.

She looked at him in amazement; his face was shadowy, but distinct. "How did you know?"

"You bought all those groceries, even though you'd just been to town a week before. I had the feeling you were leaving me a farewell token. That was partly why I went off by myself. I wanted to think about it."

Anne shook her head. "That's so strange," she said, propping herself up on her elbow, gazing curiously into his face. "I can't get over it. How would you have known I would do a thing like that. I didn't even know myself until I thought about it."

Ben smiled teasingly, with a trace of his habitual irony. "Don't you give me credit for knowing something about you after all this time?"

"Yes, but—"

"You're simply too vain," he said. "You don't want to give anyone but yourself credit for knowing things."

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She was silent, still amazed by it.

"I'm sorry about bringing up your husband before," he said suddenly. "You don't have to tell me anything about him, if you don't want to."

"No, I'd like to, but it's difficult." She lay down on her back again, her body still lightly touching his.

"You were only married two years when he died, weren't you?"

"Yes, how did you know?"

"I once saw the insurance papers about the car accident he was in. They were lying on your desk in Washington . . . I shouldn't have looked, I'm sorry."

"No that's all right. I don't mind."

"You were happy with him, weren't you?"

"Yes."

He was silent a moment. "I suppose that's why I feel so jealous of him . . . I've never felt I was the kind of man who could make a woman happy. It always seemed to me a special talent—like playing the trombone."

"But you can understand nuclear physics," she said, smiling.

He laughed. "Well, that's easy—by comparison . . . No, you'd be amazed the amount of time I've spent worrying about him, hating him, in a way. When I'm chopping wood, sometimes I've felt it was him I was attacking."

"Just because he made me happy?"

"Yes."

There was a moment's pause. "Well, he was a remarkable person," she said.

"Was he like me at all?"

"No, not really . . . But it doesn't matter."

"Doesn't it?"

"No." She smiled in the darkness. "I'm glad you're jealous of him, though."

"Are you?" He laughed softly and put his arm up over her shoulder, drawing her close to him. "Well, I won't feel so guilty about it then . . . maybe."

In the middle of the night Anne awoke. By the light coming in the door she guessed it was nearly five. She looked over at Ben, but he was sleeping, the cover pulled up to his nose. She got out of bed and went outside. It was still dark out. A few firecrackers were going off, probably the last. She stood watching them whirl up into the air and dissolve, less vivid now that the night was ending, but delicate and fine, like a free form design etched against the sky. Then she turned and went back into the house.

SANTAYANA: An Appreciation

Herbert J. Seligmann

"Mr. Herbert J. Seligmann, who was a student (Harvard '11 and life-long friend of George Santayana, is a retired journalist. He was the head of the Washington Bureau of the United Press International during World War II. Before that he was a political reporter and reviewer of books on art for *The New York Sun*. He was a friend of Alfred Steiglitz and has just published a unique account of Steiglitz's conversations about painting and photography. Mr. Seligmann disclaims special competence in either philosophy or literature, but he is a very intelligent observer of a half century of American life and he writes clearly with the special insight of a friend."

Writing about Santayana could be an exercise in presumption and folly, he has been so comprehensively written about, and he has so completely written himself. If in our time a spirit has been consummately achieved and realized, as poet, philosopher, essayist, critic, novelist and master stylist, it must bear his name. Yet, in the infinity of possible existences to which he gave the name essence, place may be found for the memories and correlations he has stimulated in one of his many grateful and admiring students.

There is the visual image of him, as he sat, in the year 1910 or 1911, on a raised platform before his classes discoursing—lecturing would be too formal and banal a word—in the courses he gave on metaphysics and aesthetics. The voice was even, melodious, the diction perfect—later "a great and venerable personage," Lady Stanley of Alderly, after complimenting Santayana on his English, said he spoke in the language of Queen Victoria—and his poise, with the fine domed forehead, the brilliant myopic brown eyes, the fine dark moustache, and the smiling detachment, had in them something akin to the presence of a Chinese sage or a Mongolian Buddhist.

He was there, as he knew and some of his students understood, less to instruct than to evoke. After the unrehearsed creation of a particularly witty and pregnant phrase, he would glance leisurely over the attentive heads to note whether any, in the process of tak-

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ing notes, were pausing long enough to enjoy. He always hated being a professor and he seemed hardly to fit into the Harvard of President Charles William Eliot, with its heavy overtones of Brahmin Boston, its preponderantly amateurish approach to education as it was understood in England and on the continent, and its domination by what Santayana always felt was snobbery, Protestant acquisitiveness and sanctimony. In fact, he did not belong in that environment for, as my term in the Harvard class of 1912 was drawing to a close, the year in which his mother died, he was giving away his books and preparing to migrate overseas never to return.

This was a natural and inevitable move for him. He was by birth, early childhood loyalties, and until his ninth year, in language, a son of Catholic Spain, both his parents having been of that nation: though, as he later found, English was the only language in which he confidently and extensively wrote. His mastery of this and other languages was distinguished. On one of the several occasions when we spent an evening together in Boston, I invited him to dine at a table d'hote frequented by members of the French faculty and others interested in conversing in French. One walked up the stoop of a brownstone house, entered what would originally have been called a front parlor and there seated oneself informally at a large round table open to all comers. To my horor, on the evening in question, the round table was filled and we were ushered downstairs to supplementary tables in and adjacent to the kitchen. Santayana accepted the descent with perfect ease. Here too conversation was general. Such was the pure and musical flow of his French that a spellbound silence greeted his remarks.

His ease and quiet mastery in company were matched by an understanding sympathy, the obverse of the relentless rigor which he applied to the technical aspects of philosophic thought. Once as we were walking after dinner on Commonwealth Avenue, the talk turned to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt,* and I ventured an observation on the wider symbolism of the Button Molder in that play. With a courtesy he might have shown a distinguished colleague, he turned to the young undergraduate I was and remarked: "Now that is very interesting, I had not thought of that." I felt at once as I still do, that it was a gesture issuing from the soul of kindness and possible only from a great gentleman.

His attire was precise, even his gait in walking had something non-American, European exactness and formality, it was the gait of a stocky, well-coordinated but non-athletic man. One could not imagine him taking money from a trouser pocket, it was slipped neatly from his vest. His handkerchief, in the fashion then elegant, was tucked in the cuff of his sleeve. From stem to stern in his manner, dress, and mind, Santayana cultivated and practiced precision. To the very end of his life, aged 88, he was still clarifying, redefining, and explaining to students and correspondents, young and old, the essential points of the philosophic system he had formed, as he always insisted, on the basis of common sense.

In many, if not most respects, he was non-American, yet throughout his life, while he cordially disliked much in American ways, he held and kept numerous close American friends. He never got over that first strangeness, coming to Boston after having lived with his father in Avila, Spain, for the first eight years of his life, having thoroughly learned and mastered the Catholic catechism, and feeling himself always a Latin. In fact, he preserved his Spanish citizenship to the end of his life.

His mother, a Spaniard, having married in Manila a Sturgis of Boston, had by him four children, of whom two girls and a son survived. Widowed, she later married a Spanish gentleman whom she had known in Manila. Her second husband, George's father, elected to remain in Spain while she took the children of her first marriage to be educated in America, as she had promised to do. After his father had brought him to Boston to join the family, it was from Susana, the elder of the two sisters, to whom he remained loyally devoted as long as she lived, that Santayana learned English. Her interest in architecture became an enthusiasm of his, and on his many travels in England, on the Continent and in the Near East, he visited and enjoyed architecture as a part of man's environment. The detachment his family relations imposed helped to form his character, the style of his life, and the beliefs he maintained throughout his career. Set apart as he was, despite the prominent part he took in activities both in Boston Latin School, and at Harvard, where he was a founder of the *Harvard Monthly,* and an editor of the *Lampoon,* he brought to America and took from it qualities that made him one of the leaders of the philosophic world. For he made of his philosophy a thorough-going way of life.

Reading especially, and drawing, interests which could be indulged in more or less solitude, formed his mind, and he early discovered a facility in dealing with abstract thought. He chose the strict canon of the sonnet for his expression in poetry, though he later wrote, on classical themes, two verse plays: *The Marriage of Venus*—in which the goddess accepts Vulcan as husband, having first sought out and given herself to Mars; and *Philosophers at Court,* a witty dialogue dealing with Platonism, about which Santayana later said he had cured it with homeopathic dosage. His translations included selections from the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rimbaud, Tibullus, the Spaniards Calderon and Lope de Vega, and Jorge Guillen. His favorite poets were first Byron, later Leopardi and de Musset, whose works he knew almost by heart.

During his undergraduate years at Harvard, his mother gave him an allowance and on less than one dollar a day — the dollar having not yet coasted down the precipitate decline of depreciation — he "managed to dress decently," to join such clubs as the Institute, the Hasty Pudding, and the U.K., to buy his books, "and even in my junior year, to stay at rich peoples' houses and to travel." His half-brother, Robert, gave him his old evening clothes. Out of his total annual allowance of $750, tuition took $150, rent $44, board at

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the college commons, Memorial Hall, $200, the remaining less than one dollar a day sufficing for the other expenses named. The simple living he learned and practiced as an undergraduate he continued, though, later on as his fame spread and his income grew, he found the freedom he sought in travel, and in study, and in living as he wished at Oxford and Cambridge in England, on the Riviera, in the Dolomites, in Paris, at Avila, Florence, Venice, and at the last in Rome.

Several of the sonnets, while not to be taken too literally, indicate that lack of money, as well as social and spiritual alienation, formed barriers to love affairs. In desperation, at the age of twenty, he clung to Catholicism as an anchor, or at least to the Catholic ritual of spirituality; though, toward the end of his life in a letter to Father Mathew Hoehn, who was composing a book on Catholic writers, he asked not to be included, inasmuch as he had never been a practicing Catholic, his views in philosophy and history being "incompatible with belief in any revelation." He added that his philosophy "like that of the ancients," might be useful to a well-grounded Catholic student "in defending the political and mystical doctrines of the Church." He qualified this sop to Cerebus by repeating his often-stated belief that like the ideas of science and of the senses, all religious ideas are symbolical.

This point of view appears also in a letter he wrote his half-sister Susana in 1906, where he stressed that his own philosophy "*no es muy catolico;* it is independent of religion altogether, and looks at religion merely as at a historic human fact, more or less appealing or beneficient, as the case may be."

It is an aspect of Santayana which has puzzled many of his friends as well as critics who could not reconcile his skepticism with what they felt was a strong and visible preference for things Roman Catholic over other western forms of religious belief. His less well-known book, published in 1946, *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels, or God in Man,* offers an excellent example of what may be considered Santayana's ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, he equates the moral beauty of the Gospels with that of Homer, the *Upanishads,* or the *Koran,* asserts that the Gospels "were composed in the Church, by the Church, and for the Church," and that it was "the Church that gave authority to the Gospels, not the Gospels that determined the faith of the Church." In short, he studies the Gospels not for any historical authenticity as to the life of Jesus, which he believed to be irrecoverable, but for their "moral and dramatic inspiration." Part 1 of the book is a detailed analysis of Christ as God-Man and Man-God, as the figure is developed in the rumors, parables, churchly and evangelical structure of the Gospels. Santayana rationalizes it so far as possible and treats the Gospel accounts as if they were literal and the person of Christ as an actuality instead of a construct derived from Hebrew theology and myth to satisfy human aspiration. In part 2, entitled "Ulterior Considerations," he recognizes that the historical Jesus is inaccessible to criticism because almost all knowledge of him rests on inferences drawn from faith in the minds of Christians. "This faith had well-known roots in the Jewish religion and in the moral condition of the world in the first century of the Roman empire." So that the approach to the Gospels requires "a certain warmth of fancy, and a certain sympathy with *la fonction fabulatrice";* and he asserts that in religion as in poetry the question whether events have actually occurred is "trivial or irrelevant." He concludes that Christianity in its Roman Catholic version offers the best answer to the questions raised by the Life of Reason; and "The idea of Christ, with the corresponding theory of a supernatural soul in man, puts the conclusion before us in a dramatic myth, where the changed affections of the enlightened spirit are represented as a life lived or to be lived in other worlds."

A week before Santayana died, Cory records in his book on *The Later Years,* Santayana uttered his final comment on this subject: that there were two worlds, of science with the methods of controlled observation, and of the other world, of the imagination in which he was personally more at home:

> "He was speaking very slowly, and seemed to weigh each sentence.
>
> " 'Always bear in mind,' Santayana continued,' that my naturalism does not exclude religion; on the contrary it allows for it. I mean that religion is the inevitable reaction of the imagination when confronted by the difficulties of a truculent world. It is normally local and always mythical, and it is *morally true.* People always believe in their native myths'."

With this background of commitment, Santayana often expressed his dislike for Protestantism, democracy, liberalism, and their works. He does give to the Jews some part of their due, Judaism having given Christianity "a foothold in history" and having, together with the Greeks, made Christian theology. "The Jews themselves produced Christianity," he wrote, "and the Greeks helped them to do it." Yet, in his comments on the contemporary world, he seemed unable to refrain from an occasional contemptuous jibe at Jews, slurs unworthy of a liberal intelligence and a philosopher. This must be regarded as one of the penalties of finitude which even a philosopher cannot escape.

The detachment noted as early as 1893 by George Herbert Palmer, when Santayana was a candidate for a teaching post at Harvard — "The man is merely an amused observer, without stakes in the world he inhabits" — became the ruling direction in his life. J. B. Priestly too, characterizing him in 1924, found that "he seems like a mind in mid-air." But he was and became a civilized man not merely through life-long disciplined habit but by intense conviction. As, in his undergraduate days at Harvard he won the life-long friendship of the second Earl Russell, brother of Bertrand, so in his later years he was sought out and became the friend of social and intellectual leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. Generations of intellectual young mice have nibbled at his huge stores of nourishing cheese. So, he brought into American life, and somehow made it American, something that even when

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undomesticated permeated the thought, manner, and the imaginations of aspiring young men. His was the way of the saints, poets and philosophers. Momentarily in reading him, one is transported to the tranquil clear truth which possessed him, in which largely he sought to live, and lived; and the entanglements life imposes on the sorrowful spirit fall away.

Very early in life he had concluded that the difficult family life he experienced typified, "what life really is: something confused, hideous, and useless." So he faced the world without illusion and devoted himself undeviatingly to the spirit, to "a steady contemplation of all things in their order and worth." He decided and maintained that decision unwaveringly, to live so far as possible without possessions, put behind him thoughts of wealth and its obligations, and of any personal involvements other than friendship. It was a course during which he confessed that more than once he had crossed a desert in all that pertained to himself. But he never lost his distaste for living in the public world which bored and disgusted him, "the world of business, politics, family, and society. It was only the glimmer of sport, humor, friendship, or love falling over it that made it tolerable."

A volume of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* he carried in his pocket, Schopenhauer briefly was one of his favorite authors, and Spinoza filled him with joy and enthusiasm.

Debate long eddied over the question of whether or not Santayana had or had not a "system" of philosophy. He himself always deprecated any rigid comprehensive system purporting finally to encompass the universe. Irving Singer, who edited a collection of Santayana essays in literary criticism, maintained that though he did not have a comprehensive system he did have a point of view. Irwin Edman edited selections from the complete works under the title of *The Philosophy of Santayana.* The controversy at this late date seems scarcely relevant to the massive literature in which Santayana developed his stance in life. From his early essay in aesthetics, *The Sense of Beauty* — and Santayana always insisted that he was not an aesthetician —continuing through the volumes of *The Life of Reason,* later concentrated into one; terminating so far as his technical philosophy, in the "Realms" series which he introduced with *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, and ranging widely in some thirty books in all, and in lectures and contributions to periodicals from the Harvard Monthly to learned journals in both hemispheres; analyzing shrewdly and often with inimitable wit and charm the philosophies of the ancient Greeks, of his beloved Spinoza, of the German and English schools, as well as the pragmatists and New Realists in America; Santayana's firm basis for his scheme seems clear to anyone willing to devote the effort necessary to explore it.

He might smilingly have agreed with Whitehead's statement, quoted by Harry Austryn Wolfson, that "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." Yet Santayana wore his Platonism with a difference. He proclaimed himself variously a materialist and naturalist; and repudiated the Platonic conception of ideas as above, apart from, and dominating matter, asserting that "An ideal out of relation to the actual demands of living beings is so far from being an ideal that it is not even a good."

At the basis of his thought was Matter, Substance — which, following Spinoza, he sometimes equates with God — whose episodes and convolutions and changes in the universal and unpredictable flux could be apprehended only as manifested to human beings in the form of essences. He found, to his delight, confirmation of his discovery of essence in the works of the French novelist, Proust, and in his essay on Proust, he gives a succinct definition of the term: "An essence is simply the recognizable character of any object or feeling, all of it that can actually be possessed in sensation or recognized in memory, or transcribed in art or conveyed to another mind." Essences are, and remain, eternally unchangable, they form the Realm of infinite possibilities, which the universal flux might at any moment reveal to human apprehension. His discovery of essence forms a brilliant insight into the arrestation of that flux and change whereby the mind grasps symbols of reality. In comment on Proust's fictional research into vanished time, Santayana adds that "we could not have asked for a more unexpected witness to the fact that life as it flows is so much time wasted, and that nothing can ever be recovered or truly possessed save under the form of eternity which is also, as he tells us, the form of art."

Repudiating Herbert Spencer's "Unknowable," he remarked that calling substance unknowable is like calling a drum inaudible because what you hear is the sound not the durm. He riddled the extreme contentions of the English idealist school, insisting that substance "is by definition the source of our life and the dispenser to us of good and evil. Respect for it, then, is the beginning of wisdom and harmony with it is the sign of salvation." While mankind cannot directly intuit Matter, God, or the natural world, men have always known "the quarter in which they lay and the circle of experiences in which each of them was manifested." All human knowledge in its communicable forms is necessarily conventional and symbolic, whether as language, the arts, science, or religion. Knowledge is always of something, and the act of knowing is a process possible only to living intelligence. Objects external to the perceiving organism exist and even though one may observe a burning candle when it is ten inches high and again when it is five inches high, it seems obvious that at the stage of eight inches when it was not being observed, it still existed at that point of time.

In Santayana's system, the active agent governing the form and development of the organism is the psyche. It is a "habit established in matter" which determines from the seed the form which the individual will assume. Through it the animal consciouness, itself a part of matter and of the world of nature, makes its

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initial adjustments. The conscious part of this adjustment is the human soul, which becomes the arbiter of values. Its realm is that of spirit, which is the animal and human being transcending itself, in the "actual light of consciousness falling upon anything — the ultimate invisible emotional fruition of life in feeling and thought." This was his chosen field, Santayana is indeed a lyricist of the spirit. In his essay on Skylarks, included in his *Soliloquies in England,* he rises on poetic wings to sing, in prose about them. For him "thought is pure music in its essence, and only in its subject matter retrospective and troubled about the facts."

As with ideas, so with truth. Santayana declares it is not a power, "only a description of the works of power," nor is itsynonymous with beauty. Knowledge is not truth but offers a glimpse of it, and so far as man can attain it, truth is "necessary to a man's moral integrity and intellectual peace." It has many partial forms. For example, a weather announcement that the sun will rise at a given hour, is true for practical purposes, viewed from a particular place, though the sun does not actually "rise." So in various forms of research and study — and Santayana mentions the mythological constructs of Freudian psychology, The dialectics of Hegel and Mark — Freud as a healer of souls, Hegel as a "theologian," and Marx as a revolutionary, each reviews the history of his chosen moral problem "in its own fantastic terms." Beyond all nearer things and specific researches, however, there must be preserved "a constant speculative reverence for truth in its divine immensity."

Santayana's panorama, like that of all growing and maturing human beings, was a changing one, and as he himself realized and stated, his emphases changed with the years. This was a freedom accorded him by his early and constant avoidance of a formal and tightly fitting philosophic system. He felt it would be something novel if a philosopher should confess that a philosophic system was a personal work of art and "should substitute the pursuit of sincerity for the pursuit of omniscience." Dogmatism in the thinker he felt, "is only the speculative side of greed and courage in the brute."

So he came to understand in his later years, and wrote in the *Later Soliloquies* that he had insisted too much in his youth on the demand that poetry be relevant to fact and that great poetry "must express the moral burden of life and must be rich in wisdom." His appreciation of form was always sure. Its roots were wide-based, and he quoted easily and with authority from the literatures of seven languages. Particularly in his literary criticism and essays, does his felicity, quick penetration, and piercing sense of comedy reveal the master. His care in arriving at correct understanding was evidenced to me in two letters he wrote me, one included in his collected letters, the other unpublished. In the first, after ruthlessly criticising a first volume of my poems I had sent him, he revealed that he had twice read one poem before he correctly diagnosed its main theme as truth rather than love. In the second, unpublished letter, on the subject of the *Letters of John Marin,* which I had edited and sent him, he again revealed that on second reading he had modified his first impression and realized that Marin's peculiarities of style were the manner of a free spirit contemptuous of conventional barriers.

His devotion to form was derived perhaps equally from the two traditions that had nurtured him: the classic Greek and the Roman Catholic. So that while he could welcome the considerable merits he found in it, The *Poetry of Barbarism,* in which he included such various figures as Shakespeare, whose lack of religion he stressed, Walt Whitman, and Robert Browning, was repellent to him. On the other hand poets who, as he felt, pursued something permanent, Dante, Cavalcante, Petrarch, Michael Angelo, and Lorenzo de Medici, whose form was clear and disciplined met with his approval. Yet, he wrote a marvellously appreciative critique of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* analyzing with sensitive skill both Hamlet's character and "this unfathomable poem."

His basic point of view is well expressed — subject to the later change in taste mentioned above — in his *Three Philosophical Poets,* Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe. For him, Lucretius achieved universality in his vision and in his grasp of the working of nature, and in that scope is incomparably great. Dante in his *Divine Comedy* expressed the "consciousness of a providential history" derived from the Hebrew tradition and the natural and moral philosophy of the Greeks. For Santayana Dante is the "master of those who know by experience what is worth knowing by experience: he is the master of *distinction."* As for Goethe, "the wisest of mankind," he knew too much perhaps to be a philosopher in any technical sense or to try to "harness this wild world into brainspun terminology."

For Santayana, as he took pains to say in his *Interpretation of Poetry and Religion,* anyone standing apart in time or attitude from sectarian controversy, must see in orthodoxy creative productiveness, faith and logic; whereas heresy constitutes rebellion against "the corollaries of a formative principle imperfectly grasped and obeyed with hesitation." This attitude persisted in one of his latest and most hotly assailed books, *Dominations and Powers,* where he applied it to analysis of the convulsions of an agonized world. The attitude is consistently maintained even in his essay on Shelley, whose poetry he loved, and it occurs in the foreword he wrote for Iris Inigo's book on Leopardi, where he writes that "The world is always classical, the truth of human destiny is always clear, if only immersion in our animal cares do not prevent us from seeing it."

It is beyond the scope of a student's remembrance and homage to attempt such a complete panorama of Santayana as Howgate published in 1938, to Santayana's approval and pleasure. But Santayana did live long, and much characteristic work did come out after

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that book had appeared, though one of the finest of his works, *Soliloquies in England* representing his love affair with that nation and people, particularly with Oxford and Cambridge and the English countryside, appeared in 1922. In the posthumously published *The Idler and His Works* where he gives something of his own accounting of himself, he finds much of himself in that early work, in his poems, the *Dialogues in Limbo,* and in the much assailed and greatly admired novel, *The Last Puritan.*

In his strictly philosophical works of analysis and criticism, he found himself at home in the Homeric Hymns, and with the Greek philosophers, he was thoroughly conversant with the philosophic line which led deviously through Spinoza, Descarte, Leibniz, Kant, Berkeley, Hume, Hegel, Fichte, and to the moderns. When it came to his contemporaries, in an essay on *"The Coming Philosophy,"* Santayana wrote a raking and in part witty and amusing demolition of confused thinking and abuse of words, remarking that "Never was a group of thinkers so sophisticated and so ill-educated . . ." He was quite merciless to the modern idealists and "new realists," and to their effort, as he saw it, to destroy intelligence, which he insisted they could not do "so long as life continues to find its expression in it."

As for the Germans, he found such Christianity as they had, permeated by paganism. He made a brilliant brief excursion into the German character by pointing out *"Hints of Egotism in Goethe,"* a forerunner of the later *Egotism in German Philosophy* published during Germany's Hitler phase. In it Santayana excoriates Nazidom's ayrants and dupes, products of Germany's pagan and divisive philosophy. As a young man, arriving in Göttingen on a Walker Fellowship, he had written of the "yellow-haired barbarians," and had found the Germans had no capacity for being bored, otherwise they would long ago have become extinct through "self-torture." As for that orchestrator of history, Spengler, although a certain pleasure is to be derived from the wide panorama he attempts, Santayana deplores the "metaphysical pretensions" of his idealism, trying to impose an artificial pattern on the flux of existence, thus "doing violence to the incorrigible variety of nature . . ." To William James, from Germany in his student year, concerning German cooking, Santayana writes that "custom can make one swallow any dish, even if it contains 39 articles."

Two phases of Santayana's commentary merit special attention: his attitudes toward America and the Americans; and his mature judgement on the trend of world affairs. For these commentaries he was afforded ample perspective: for he had a student sojourn in Germany as well as in England and Paris; he was obliged to stay in England during the first World War; and during the second World War, in his later years, he remained in Rome, cut off for a time from contact with the free Western World; and toward the end of his life, even in declining health he continued busily writing in the nursing home of the British Order of the Blue Sisters, or the Little Company of Mary.

Santayana's comments on America, and specifically on its Boston aspect, are many, including his impatience with "the damnable worldliness and snobbishness prevalent at Harvard," in a letter from Göttingen in 1886. One to William James in 1900 asks James, who had taxed him with impertinence and superior airs, whether James had ever realized "the years of suppressed irritation which I have passed in the midst of an unintelligible and often disingenuous Protestantism, which is thoroughly alien and repulsive to me . . ." He added that his studies of Plato and Aristotle had given him confidence, that it was not himself, but human reason that spoke in him and "truly the Babel in which we live has nothing in it so respectable as to put on the defensive the highest traditions of the human mind."

During his lectures in 1911, in California and Canada, he found these regions "intellectually emptier than the Sahara, where I understand the Arabs have some idea of God or Fate." He finds himself in greater sympathy with the Roman Catholic Church politically because the radical people he knew "are proving to be such Hottentots and so wholly ignorant of the art of living or of the art of thinking." In the book published in 1921 on *Character and Opinion in the United States,* he found American life a "powerful solvent" which seemed to "neutralize every intellectual element . . . and to fuse it in the native good-will, complacency, thoughtlessness, and optimism." He draws a contrast between, on one hand, the Catholics, whose faith took shape during the Roman Empire's decline, with its disillusions about this world and its illusions about the other, its "ancient, metaphysical, poetic, elaborate, ascetic, autocratic, and intolerant" character; and on the other hand "boastful natural man, such as the American is." He rates the then foremost American philosophers, William James, whom he considered primarily a psychologist and perhaps not a philosopher at all; Josiah Royce who, James said, had "an indecent exposure of forehead." and sums up the general condition by remarking that: "Never was the human mind master of so many facts and sure of so few principles." His analysis of Dewey's pragmatism seems severe but just. To the American in general, he gives credit for sharp and liberated senses, a warm heart, eagerness to be just, and he predicts that time will lend wings to the pulses of that heart.

Perhaps his mature judgement on things American is best contained in the novel *The Last Puritan* which he incubated during forty-five years. The characters, though they were, as he said, amalgams, yere yet recognizable by those in the know. The character of the erring, charming, and lost Jim, was patterened partly on the second Earl Russell, and the Countess von Arnim, one of Russell's wives, found the character quite familiar. The two young, and chief, protagonists of the novel, Santayana later stated, contained aspects of himself: Oliver, frustrated by his own spirituality, with an a-sensual nobility and destroyed by it; and his cousin, a scape-grace, joyous and easy in his immor-

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ality, fleeing from America to live as he would and could in Europe.

Writing about the novel to the wife of his nephew, Santayana comments: "American breeding can be perfect in form, but is woefully thin in substance; so that if a man is born a poet or a mystic in America he simply starves to death, because what social life offers and presses upon him is offensive to him, and there is nothing else." In the preface to *The Last Puritan,* Santayana characterizes the American scene it portrays as "a strained, kindly, humorous, somehow fleshless world . . . I could not help feeling that what dominated America was a passing fever, a heresy, a forced enthusiasm, not really satisfying the heart and destined to end in emptiness."

In Santayana's appraisals of world trends, his speculative freedom carried him at times into positions that repelled many of his friends and provided fuel for his critics. This is particularly the case with the views he expressed in *Dominations and Powers,* and also in the autobiographical *Persons and Places.* Like Randolph Bourne, with whom he would otherwise have disagreed, who held that the health of the State is war, Santayana declared that "All government . . . is potential war; and if this threat and the ability to use force disappears, government ceases." His approach to the basic problems remained uncompromising when he declared that existence itself "was essentially a blind and involuntary war," and cited the perceptions to this effect of Heraclitus, Lucretius, and the fresh perception of it by Darwin. "It should never be forgotten by anyone who does not wish to be deceived about this world and about the place of life and morality within it." He does not hesitate to bracket the dogmatic education of the Catholic Church with that of the Russian State, insists that our society has lost its soul, and points to the threat of "brute humanity" which has the power to destroy "polite humanity, because it retains the material equipment of modern industry which has recently grown upon man like fresh hide, horns, and claws." "Survival," he concludes, "is something impossible; but it is possible to have lived well and died well." He questions current concepts of freedom—freedom from what?—and of liberty—for what ends?

As for the Reformation, in and against the Roman Catholic Church, Santayana calls it "not a reform but an insurrection, a fundamental break with a still vital past. It aimed at reversing the first principles of traditional authority . . . Only in extremities, or after centuries of dilapidation, did the spirit perceive that it was denying all authority." The corruptions and inhumanly cruel and brutal suppressions by that authority apparently interested him but little. For liberalism, Santayana has few good words. He contends that the liberal regime rationalized nothing but the "mechanism of production." He stresses the conspiratorial ferocity of Communism but the word Nazism fails to occur in his index though he condemned it in his *Egotism in German Philosophy.* The democratic ideal he thinks, rests on two assumptions: the essential similarity of human nature in all men, with the corollary of a "unanimous vision of the world and cooperative exercise of the same virtues," a view he considers a biological error, all plants and animals having developed centrifugally from the germ of life according to circumstances. His social critique can become acute, as when he stresses the anomaly of shareholders living in idleness on income the source of which they know nothing about, their legal rights based on conquests, grants, or inheritance derived from obsolete social customs. The campaign conducted by labor leaders for higher wages, shorter hours, and increased social services, is a process that must lead "very soon" to the extinction of landlords and private owners generally, "the State having rendered their property profitless and taken their place."

Representative government, for Santayana, while the most "ignoble" of governments "is not necessarily the worst." (One thinks here of Winston Churchill's remark that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the other kinds.) It is dominated by politicians who merely wish to thrive in their profession and to enjoy seeing reviews they adopted "probably by chance," triumph. He felt that liberals were probably correct during the 19th century in believing traditional institutions were on the way to destruction. But the first half of the twentieth century had already shown that a strange barbarism would dissolve "wealth, taste, and intellectual liberty," and "will think them a good riddance." If one contemplates world disorder in 1965: the general loss of values; the determined assault on every canon of truthfulness and humane value in the pestilent curse of advertising; the low morality of American business which fuels this hysterical and indecent brain-washing assault upon the spirit; and the bitter eruptions in the world power struggle; then the remarks of Santayana come to have a prophetic import.

During World War I, in a letter to his half-sister, Susana, from England he speculated about the possibility of a new and dominant "Holy German Empire," and, still speculating, wondered whether a "universal German ascendancy" might not be as desirable as any other development. "But in my heart, I confess, I am with the French, English and also with the Russians, because they all three, in various ways, make for individual freedom, and for the security and delightfulness of life. They are peoples who wish to be left alone, because they know how to make themselves comfortable and happy. The German system is one of strain and of artificial aims: it is a sort of orderly nightmare."

Incidentally, in a letter written less than two years before he died, to Corliss Lamont, Santayana specifically stated that he had never been a Fascist, in the sense of belonging to any nationalist or religious party, called Mussolini a bad man and an inexpert dictator and remarked that "dictatorships are surgical operations, only the surgeon must be an expert, not an adventurer."

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At times Santayana's personality seems almost to dissolve as he subordinates it to detached speculation, as when he could envision a germanized world or, per contra, sensed that the Bolsheviks might be right in their sense of values and their hostility to governments based on property and privilege—forms of society whose beneficiary he was no matter how modestly he lived. It was this very detachment that made him unique among American philosophers, he remained always the Spaniard and later the European man of the wide world, who wrote in masterly English. So he achieved insights hardly possible for the American-born, American-bred man. From the onrush of industrialized commercialism, Santayana, both by circumstance and by deliberate intention, always held himself apart.

It is not, however, by his political and social judgments, or even by his formal work in Philosophy that Santayana wished to be or, in the main, may be appraised. He had a clear, beautiful, translucent and lyrical style of writing, and the style was the man; he was at his best in the poetry of his prose, one of the foremost literary men of his era, his view was far-reaching and backed by dense cultural discipline and experience. He could write one of the finest, most penetrating and most whole-heartedly appreciative essays on Charles Dickens; he could create the inimitable gushing character of the German governess in *The Last Puritan;* he could in a short and brilliant sketch "Overheard in Seville," present with humorous but sympathetic comprehension, a dialogue between a young lover and his lady; he could indulge in a wonderful exchange on immortality between a departed and inquiring spirit and the ferryman to the spirit world, Charon.

His imagination was at home with the creators of the Homeric Hymns, the Ionian thinkers, the Peripatetics of Athens; it ranged freely over the arts, the monuments, and the literatures of Europe. However much he was the philosopher, he always had a neat, quick, and even rippling sense of the comic, and laughter was one of his criteria for the good life. No finer appreciation could be written than his of the spirit of England and the English as he knew them before world collapse. His vision and thought were directed always toward the rare intimations of perfection and he sought the other—worldly freedom for the spirit for which the never to be disregarded material world provided a base. He could deal with logicians on their own terms with easy mastery of philosophy's technical armament; but he was never far from common sense as he felt it, and his appeal, however formidably organized, is conversational in the best tradition of the art of conversation.

As early as 1933, he could appreciate Freud's "new myths" which were "calculated to enlighten and to chasten us enormously about ourselves." His *Dialogues in Limbo*, carried on among imaginary recreations of Democritus, Alcibiades, Aristippus the Cyrenaic, Dionysus the younger, Socrates, Avicenna, and the Spirit of a Stranger still living on earth, are masterpieces of charm and wit. In the dialogue on *"The Scent of Philosophers,"* Democritus insists that philosophers have a detectable odor. As for vegetables, "in so far as they think at all" they are "dreamers and idealists and neither nature nor I have any quarrel with vegetables." Flowers too have sweet souls, " But blooming is not knowing, and roses and cabbages should not be founders of sects." The Stranger who closely represents Santayana himself, after proclaiming himself a disciple of Democritus remarks: "I have been a stranger in all my dwelling places." And again: "As for me, disillusion was my earliest friend, and never again were chagrin and hope strong enough to persuade me that anything was to be gained by rebelling against fortune."

There is a touching passage, written in Rome in his last years, when World War II cut him off from much that he valued, telling of his sympathy with the simplest occupations: of old women knitting, of his own pleasure in drawing, "cleaning or making something, or even mending my clothes." Writing had always "entertained" him, it was for him a natural function, and he recognized that some of the "peculiarities and faults" of his work were due to the "dreamful" improvization in his composition.

He saw the collapse of the world he had known—"personally I am reconciled to the end of the world—the Christian genteel world"—on which he had commented in *The Genteel Tradition at Bay*. "Heaven and Hell," as he wrote as early as 1920 to B.A.G. Fuller, "are relative and *essentially prospective;* by the time we get to either we begin to see that each of them has its other side. I think to be born under Bolshevism would not be worse than to be born in Boston . . ."

Intolerable, life in this rough, violent, unpredictable world was to the man who, with all his commitments, prejudices and peculiarities, devoted himself for all his years to the only free world he knew, that of the spirit. His kindness to the aspiring, his generosity to those who enlisted his sympathy, were part of his understanding of the rigors of having to live at all. But in his most intense loyalties he never abrogated his critical sense. He had a duty beyond all human demands, to the truth, so far as he could divine it. The primary imperative of all his writing, poetry, and prose, was to be honest about his deepest feeling. It was this quality of singleness, of intellectual purity that made the young soldiers in Italy, and students from everywhere, bring him books to autograph, seek him out to listen to him, or just to see him. So it is hardly strange that in the last interview he was ever to give, not long before his death in 1952—an interview recorded by Lawrence Dame and published in the Harvard Alumni Bulletin of 10 November 1956—Santayana, being asked whether he would live his life over again in the same way, replied: ". . . had I been given my choice I would have said, 'Dear Lord, please, do not let me be born at all.' "

Not having been given that choice, Santayana set his course and held it to the end.

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Books

FURY OF A HEBREW PROPHET

Cannibals and Christians. Norman Mailer. New York: The Dial Press, 1966. 400pp. $5.95

Those announcements of Norman Mailer's literary demise were premature. With last year's publication of *An American Dream,* a novel, Mailer broke down certain well-publicized psychological obstacles and resumed work in the genre which by his own profession matters most to him. One should also note *Death for the Ladies* (1962), a collection of his poems and short prose, and *The Presidential Papers* (1963), embodying his political views. Now, with this new book, described by his publisher as "the best of his occasional writing of the past six years," we have another hefty addition to the canon. Mailer evidently refuses to read his obituaries.

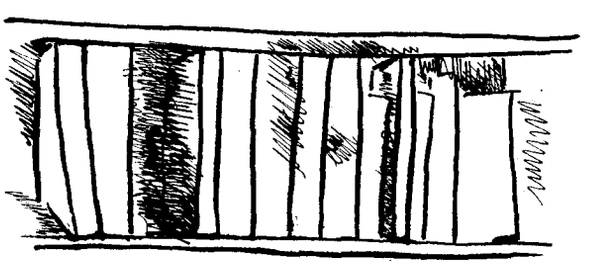
The book is wide ranging and therefore difficult to review. Like good Jewish conversation (and much of it has the racy tang, the spontaneity of conversation), it swoops and veers, eluding the unwary and perhaps annoying the intellectually fastidious. Indeed, if there is one danger for Mailer's future, it may be this tendency to race headlong in several different directions, to start but not finish, to tantalize with hors d'euvres and never quite reach the main course. Still, because of Mailer's nerve and vividness, his occasional pieces seem likely to outlive the occasions which bred them.

Several components of Mailer's book can be disregarded here. Of the two short stories little can be said. The numerous poems sprinkling the volume are on the whole disappointing: a few invite rereading, but most are word play, filler, or smut. In one poem Mailer expresses a desire "to smite a fist of the Lord's creation/into the womb of that muse/which gives us poems." He usually smites the wrong womb. Comprising nearly half the volume are four interviews: two short and interesting (with *Playboy* and the *Paris Review*), two imaginary—interior dialogues they might be called—and tedious, dealing at length and quite solemnly with such subjects as the lesson to be learned from an inspection of one's own feces and whether driftwood and sardines have souls.

The remaining pieces, devoted mainly to literature and politics, are much better. As a literary critic Mailer is surprisingly eclectic and fair (I say surprisingly because of his bad-boy reputation); with his insider's knowledge of the novelist's art, he makes generous allowances for noble faiures. But with failures due to sloth and slackness he is merciless, and no one should miss his excoriations of Salinger's recent work. He also has the virtue of independence: despite all the bad and lukewarm notices of Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King,* I am now, thanks to Mailer, eager to read it.

In his practical or applied criticsm, Mailer is happier than in his literary theories. The trouble with the latter, I should say, lies in their unreasonable expectations: the novelist should lead us to God or politics or both. Regardless of his admiration for Faulkner and Hemingway, this thesis leads Mailer to the following judgment of both: "Their vision was partial, determinedly so, they saw that as the first condition for trying to be great—that one must not try to save. Not souls, and not the nation. The desire for majesty was the bitch which licked at the literary loins of Hemingway and Faulkner: the country could be damned. Let it take care of itself."

However unacceptable these opinions, they do direct the reader to Mailer's own attempts to save the nation, his political writings. In this volume, their most exasperating aspect is a series of contrasts between Johnson and Kennedy, all in favor of the latter. Inconsistency gives Mailer no pause. When Johnson practices skillful political manipulation, he is a Renaissance despot; when Kennedy does so, it is art. Johnson's failure to defy majorities (Mailer says nothing of his unsurpassed ability to *create* them) is proof of cowardice; Kennedy's similar failure is evidence of good taste. Kennedy's "overwhelming ambition" becomes, by some strange metamorphosis, intolerable vanity in Johnson. Kennedy's Kierkegaardian ability to see himself as at once good and evil becomes in Johnson a clear token of dangerous instability. Kennedy's flirtation with the holocaust, his firm stand on Russian missiles in Cuba, is to Mailer the grandest poker bluff ever called by a statesman; the possibility that Johnson is calling China's bluff in Vietnam never enters Mailer's head. And so on. What these differences all come down to is style, which is to say physiognomy: Johnson, you see, has "greedy" and cynical eyes, an "acquisitive" nose, and "a boss mouth"; Kennedy was just the ticket because he had (and Mailer isn't kidding) the air and demeanor of a movie star.



If Mailer's seriousness sometimes turns into jest, his humor is nearly always serious and mordant. The following passage on Vietnam is worth quoting at length as a splendid specimen of Mailer's black humor:

> Let's cease all serious war, kids. Let's leave Asia to the Asians. Let us, instead, have wars which are like happenings. Let us have them every summer. Let us buy a tract of land in the Amazon, two hundred million acres will do, and throw in Marines and Seabees and Air Force, Scuba divers for the river bottom, motorcyclists for the mud-races, carrier pilots landing on bounce-all decks in typhoons, invite them all, the Chinks and the Aussies, the Frogs and the Gooks and the Wogs, the Wops and the Russkies, the Yugos, the Israelis, the Hindoos, the Pakistanis. We'll have war games with real bullets and real flame-throwers, real hot-wire correspondents on the spot,

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TV with phone-in audience participation, amateur war movie film contests for the soldiers, discotheques, Playboy Clubs, pictures of the corpses for pay TV, you know what I mean—let's get the hair on the toast for breakfast.

Unless Vietnam is the happening. Could that be? Could that really be? Little old Vietnam just a happenning? Cause if it is, Daddy Warbucks, couldn't we have the happening just with the Marines and skip all that indiscriminate roast tit and naked lunch, all those bombed-out civilian ovaries, Mr. J., Mr. L.B.J., Boss Man of Show Biz—I salute you in your White House Oval; I mean America will shoot all over the shithouse wall if this jazz goes on, Jim.

Is this gratuitous nastiness? It will sicken many readers (as Mailer knew), but sickness can be salutary if it induces vomiting, purging of the disease. And Mailer sees America as moribund, needing a radical cure, for the symptoms of its illness are not only Vietnam but the frug, *Playboy,* Camp, Hilton Hotel architecture: everything. With the fury of a Hebrew prophet, Mailer dreads the apocalypse toward which we are drifting yet strives to alter its character.

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DINNER AT ELEKTRA'S

Here among the crystal and antiques,
With candles on the polished table reflecting
The shape of faces as in memory,
We will speak of our lost parents, conjure
Up the ghosts of those we think the other
Killed. The spoils of death have long since been
Divided; we know who gets which rings and
watches,
The fairest distribution of the bonds.
The family album splits its leaves, and I
Take Mother's picture home. Whatever fears
Of Father linger, she will smile from
Her frame. Sister, you and I must kiss,
Forgive; we have so many nights ahead—
So many lies and unreported dreams.

Larry Rubin

COMER

Inner Weather, Robert Phillips. The Golden Quill Press. 64 pp. $3.00

Because I am an English professor and in one way or another in the literary buiness, I frequently am asked who are the comers. Uusually their inquiries are concerned with fiction writers but they are also concerned with poets. I think from here on one might chance it that Robert Phillips is going to have a place among the young poets. His *Inner Weather* is a thoughtful book. Much of the writing is very skillful. To give you an example, this is from the "Weird Sister."

There was a woman with an awful eye
who brandished a witching wand
("To beat the dogs off with!" she cried),
who walked our world even in wildest weather,
nursing within her lank arm's crook
the doll she'd fashioned from rags. Its
bright button eye was affixed
upon the faded blue-denim comforter
which was our sky. The familiar doll,
the daughter, hung limp and loveless within her grasp.
"Fly for us, oh fly!" we jeered,
come to their unpretty pass.

If one could read the poem through, one could see that not only are there Shakespearean echoes here, Keatsian echoes, and echoes from Coleridge because we're dealing with what Graves calls the white goddess. What struck me in going through the poem was the way in which Mr. Phillips had modified the Yeatsian idiom. I suppose, if there is one influence here that seems to me to be at least conscious, it would be from Yeats. I'd like to quote the last stanza because I think it catches the tone of Yeats:

Now she has flown.
No cold mud sucks at her freezing toes.
Her high, curlew cries do not thread the winds
shuttling past windows where drowsy students stare.
The doughty daughter, maimed asymmetrical,
cast aside, sees but pities not the spectacle
of that rockpile which rose up rightly
to smash a witch who could not
fly.

Another thing that struck me in reading Mr. Phillips was how the post World War II generation has assimilated its literary heritage. It looks at Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Yeats, but from a new position. The poets who were writing in the thirties and early forties didn't turn and look over their shoulders at the work of Eliot or Dylan Thomas. These poets following World War II do just that. They take the writing seminar for granted; they like to do poems about pictures, particularly zany pictures, and melodramas. They can go back and pick up verse form such as Haiku. They look on the world as beaten from the oppressions of World War II. They are in a sense down to rock bottom in a way that poets in the 1920's and 30's were not. The bomb as we say may have something to do with it.

But I think there is another consideration, namely, that each generation stands on the shoulders of its predecessor; in this case I think there are two predecessors—one composed of the 1920's and secondly Dylan Thomas. One must admit I think that the ironies of Eliot and Pound are in the true sense of the word, sensational. The wasteland image is sensational. The cantos reach in all directions for arcane learning. Then in the thirties we have Thomas with his ocean rhythms which no one should try to repeat because they are peculiar to him. And in Auden the poet who protects himself by ironies, by being a wiseacher. But with these new poets like Phillips, the irony is there

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but it is reined in, in control. This sort of poetry is being written in England and I suppose some of it is being written in America but this poem is the one that most struck me from Mr. Phillips' poetry.

If this volume is indicative, then we can rest in the assurance that Mr. Phillips' contribution to the American literary scene in the next generation may be considerable.

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A BANG, NOT A WHIMPER

Upon the Sweeping Flood, Joyce Carol Oates. Vanguard Press, N.Y. 1966. $4.95.

Joyce Carol Oates has never written a trivial story. Even when she misses the mark, she misses because she has tried to accomplish too much within the confines of the short story. Her concerns are big concerns: madness, revenge, hate, lust, desperation, shame, loneliness. The world of her imagination is one in which religion and all tradition have lost their meaning and human experience is rendered meaningless. Only through the eruption of violence can individuals defend or express themselves.

In her first collection, *By the North Gate* (1963), this violence sometimes seemed gratuitous. Further, that book bore testimony to Miss Oates' literary antecedents, especially Faulkner's rhetoric ("Sweet Love Remembered") and Flannery O'Connor's vision ("By the North Gate"). Nevertheless, *By the North Gate* contained much that was strikingly original. It promised a great deal, promise which partially was fulfilled by her compelling novel, *With Shuddering Fall* (1964) — an intense symphony wrought of contemporary ugliness and age-old doom — in which Miss Oates used stock-car racing as a metaphor for violence in our time. The novel probed for the roots of man's existence: "It is insane to look for meaning in life, and it is insane not to."

In *Upon the Sweeping Flood* the young author continues to pursue these concerns with even greater success. She has at last thrown off the shackles of the authors she admires. The language and the vision are now totally her own. So complete is her detachment from literary predecessors that Miss Oates is now capable of parodying them: "The Death of Mrs. Sheer" is a grotesquely funny take-off on all the bad television dramas you ever saw, written in the manner of all the Southern writers you ever read. It ends with a bang, not a whimper.

The award-winning title story tells of a traveler caught up in the fury of a flood. During one terrifying night he is estranged from "civilization" and undergoes a wrenching conversion to religious faith. The experience convinces him of the reality of a deliberate Power loose in the universe, a thought so horrible to him he goes mad. The flood itself is a powerful metaphor for the uncontrollable inner forces which can overwhelm us all.

Another metaphoric story, and one of the best in the collection, is "What Death with Love Should Have to Do" — in which a motorcycle gang's turkey run becomes a death ride for an aborting nymphomaniac.

"At the Seminary" deals with anonther type of religious crisis, experienced by a young seminarian on the verge of madness. Miss Oates' seminary is the very apotheosis of sterility; the cocktail and the hors d'-oeuvre constitute the elements for contemporary communion:

> Nothing had an odor, nothing was out of place, nothing disturbed the range of the eye: the building and its people might not yet have been born, might be awaiting birth and baptism, immersion in smells and disorder.

A third story concerning the failure of religion is "Stigmata," in which the ecstasy of a present-day miracle is transformed into a terrible God-sent punishment for a merciless man.

A second type of failure explored in these stories is that of the intellect. In "The Survival of Childhood" — a study of two brothers, one stolidly academic, the other recklessly wild — it is the uneducated who reveals himself to be the true thinker, the creator, and the one who pays the price of mental anguish. As in the stories "Archways" and "Dying," Miss Oates' college instructors and artists possess second-rate minds and settle for second-rate lives. Even worse are those characters with no intellectual aspirations whatsoever, those like Annette, the materialistic housewife in "First Views of the Enemy," whose enemy is not external but rather the paranoid manifestations of her own insecurity.

Unlike most modern practitioners of the art of fiction, the prolific Miss Oates appears most comfortable writing in the short story form. The single fault one could find with these stories is her penchant for over-intellectualizing, for slipping into abstraction before satisfactorily delineating character. Her tales cry out perhaps too obviously for explication, so consciously have theme, symbol, and metaphor been fused. But this is mere proof Miss Oates has something to say, and that she has said it in beautifully constructed works of art. Taken as a whole, *Upon the Sweeping Flood* is a dazzling performance.

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New York City

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